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AUSTRALIA'S BEST-SELLING UNOFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

New Zealand

PlayStation

ISSUE 09 • JANUARY 2000 \$15.95 INC GST

**FREE
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CHEATS
BOOKLET!**

RESIDENT EVIL 3

WE'VE PLAYED THE WORLD'S MOST
CHILLING GAME! FIRST LOOK INSIDE!

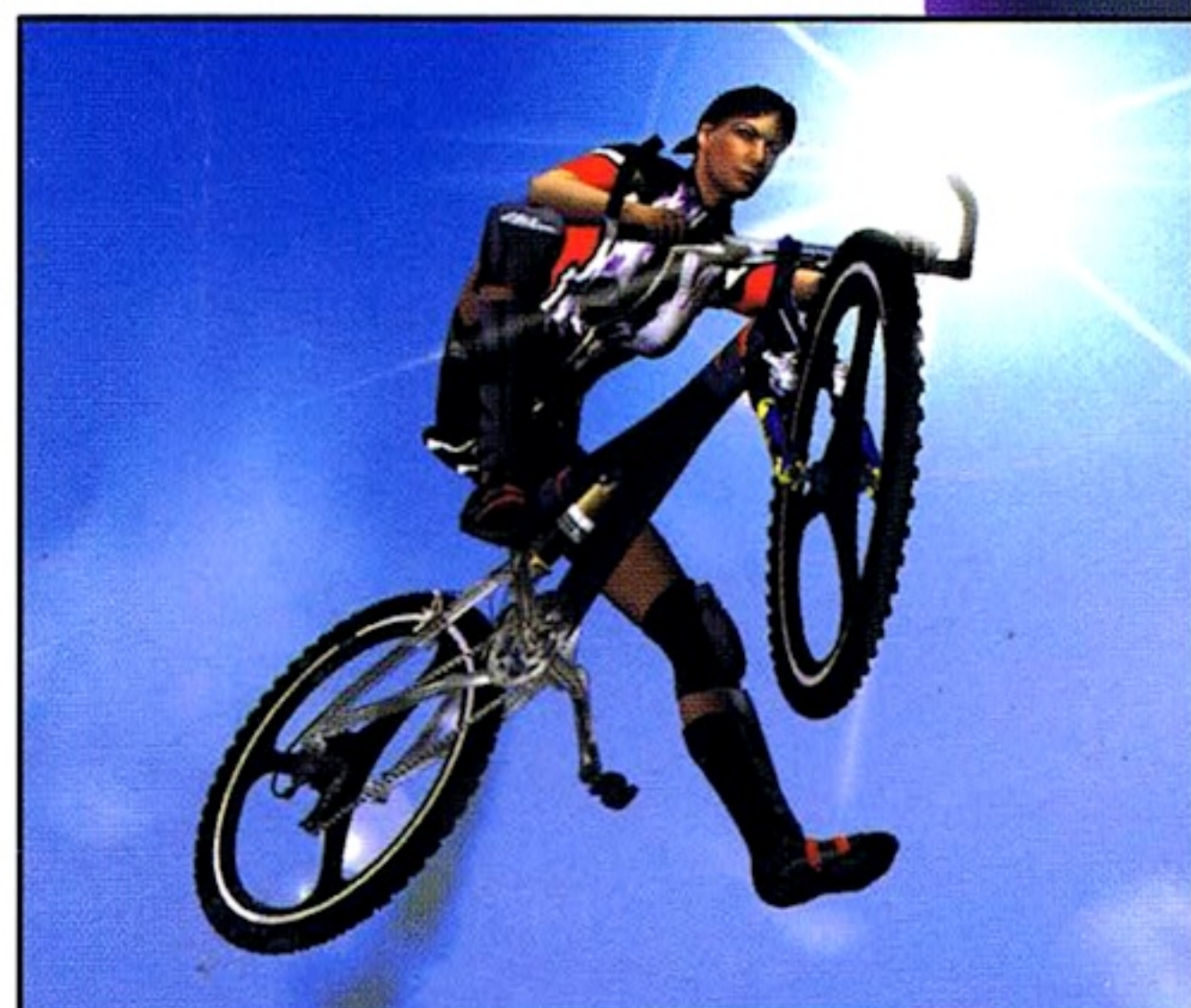
KNOCKOUT REVIEW!

FIGHT CLUB!

THE PLAYSTATION'S DEADLIEST
BOXERS SLUG IT OUT.
LET'S GET READY 2 RUMBLE!

ON THE DEMO CD

NO FEAR DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING
SLED STORM
PRINCE NASEEM BOXING
BUGS BUNNY: LOST IN TIME



ASK YOUR RETAILER IF THE DISC IS NOT HERE



GRAN TURISMO 2

THE BEST DRIVING GAME OF ALL TIME
SCREAMS BACK INTO TOP GEAR

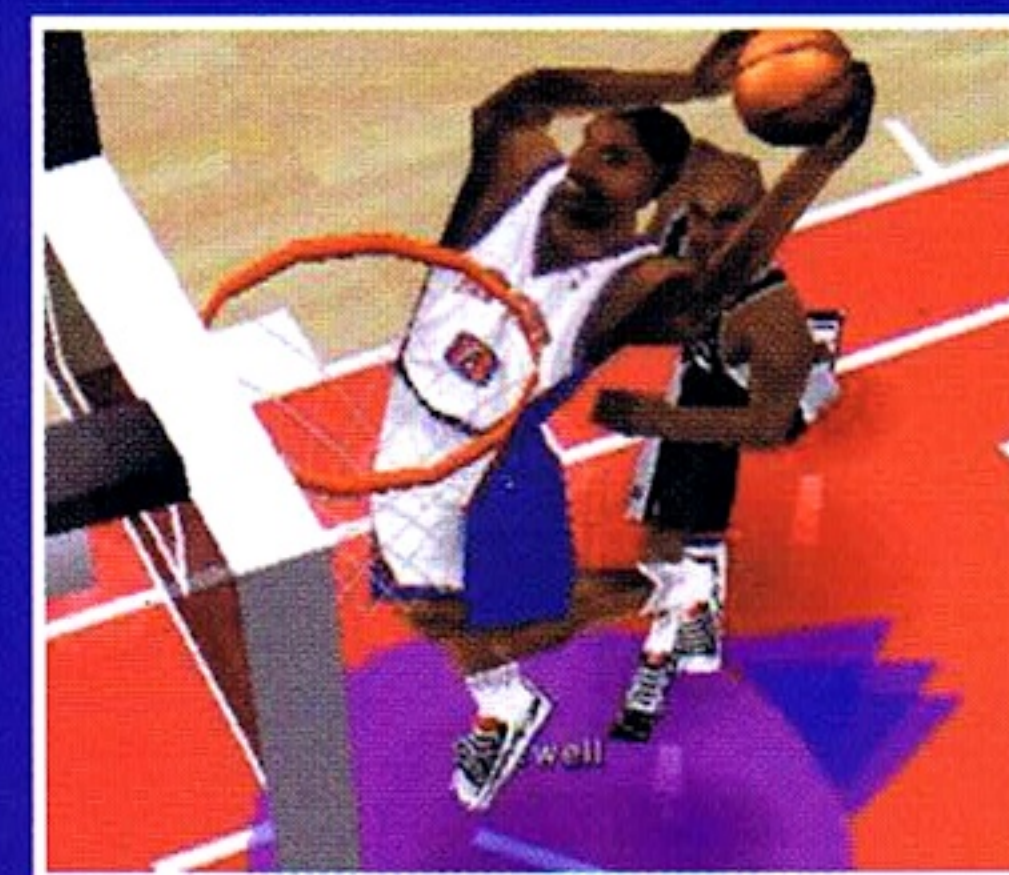
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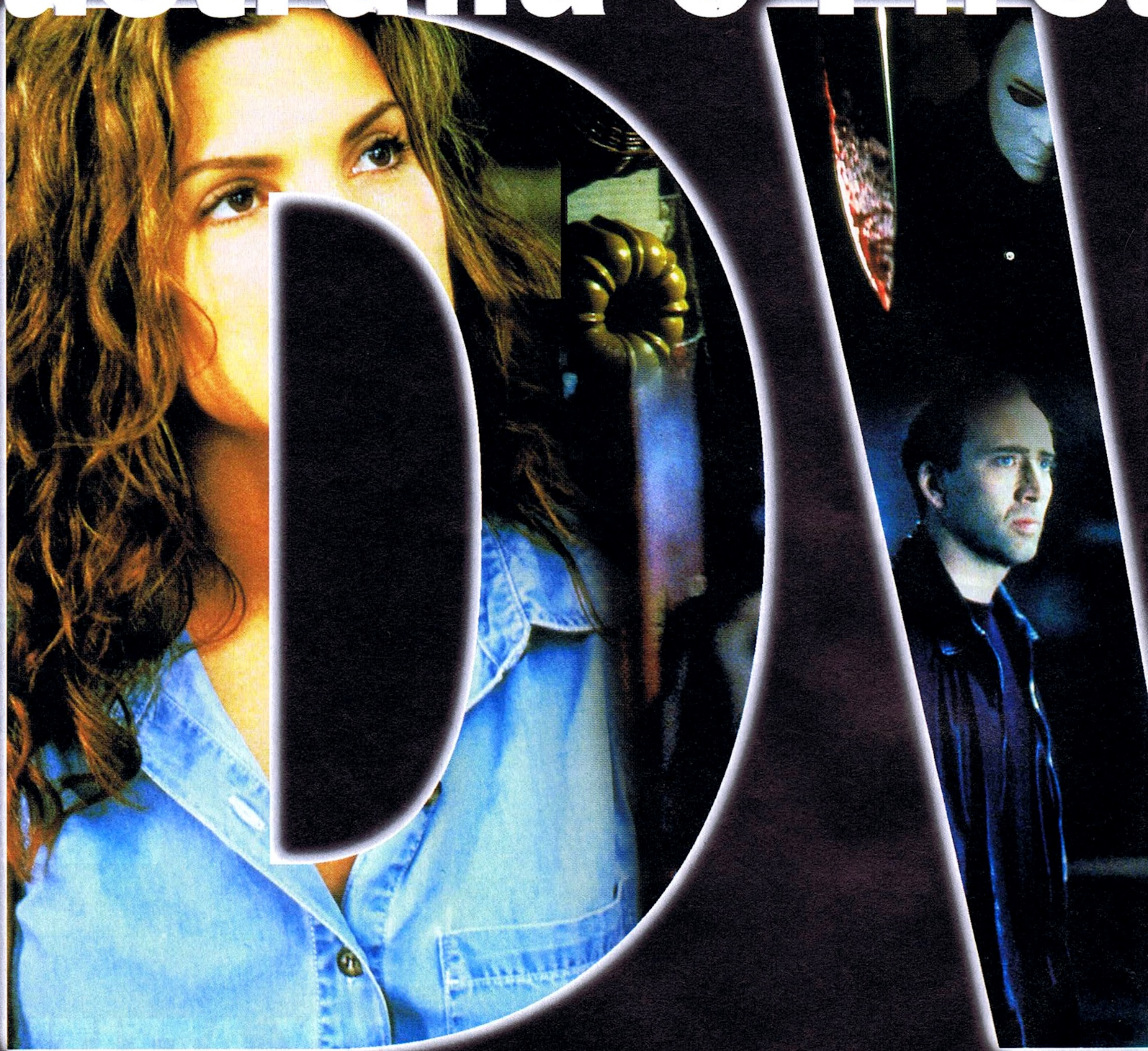
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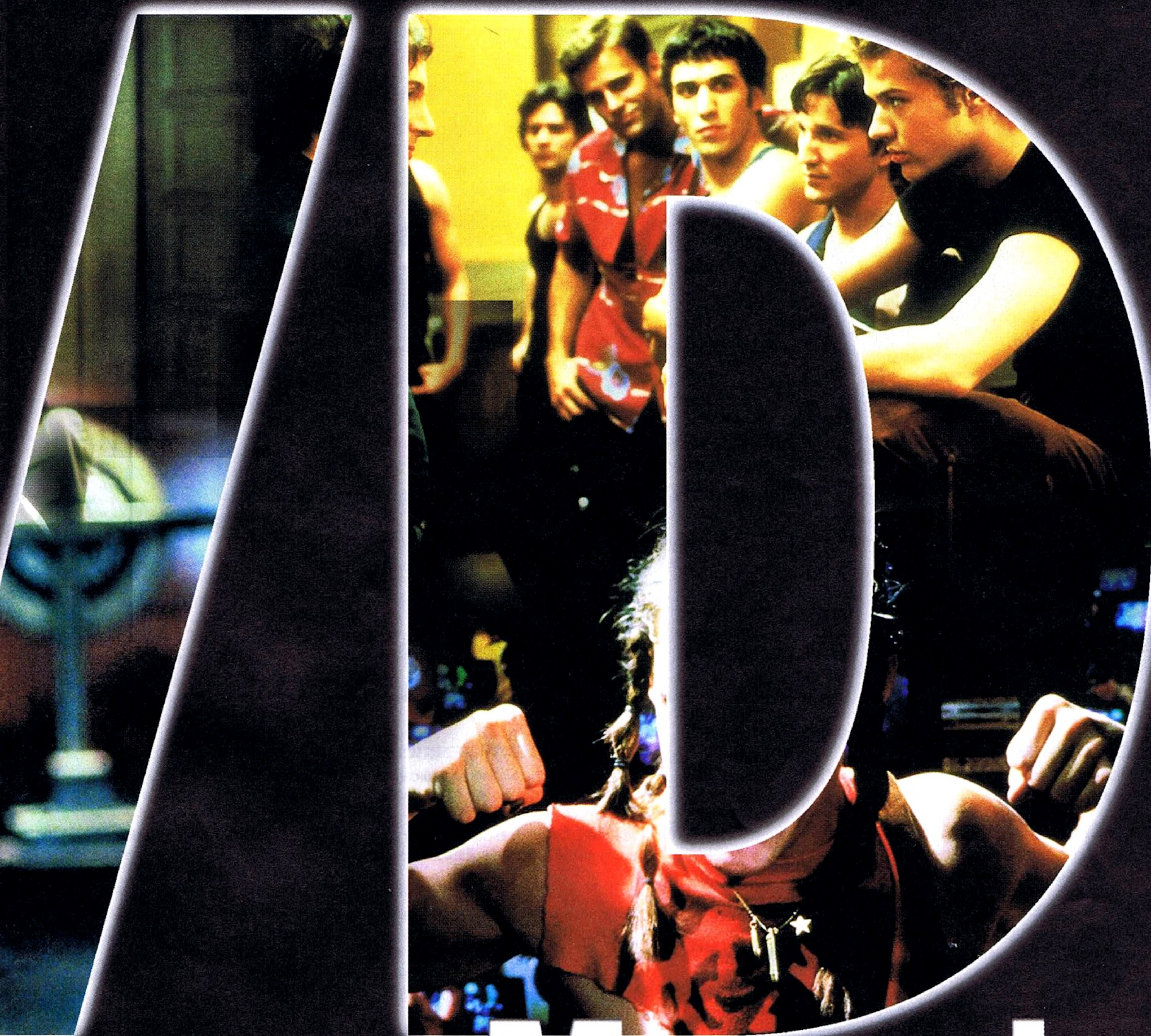
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Australia's First



COMING



Magazine

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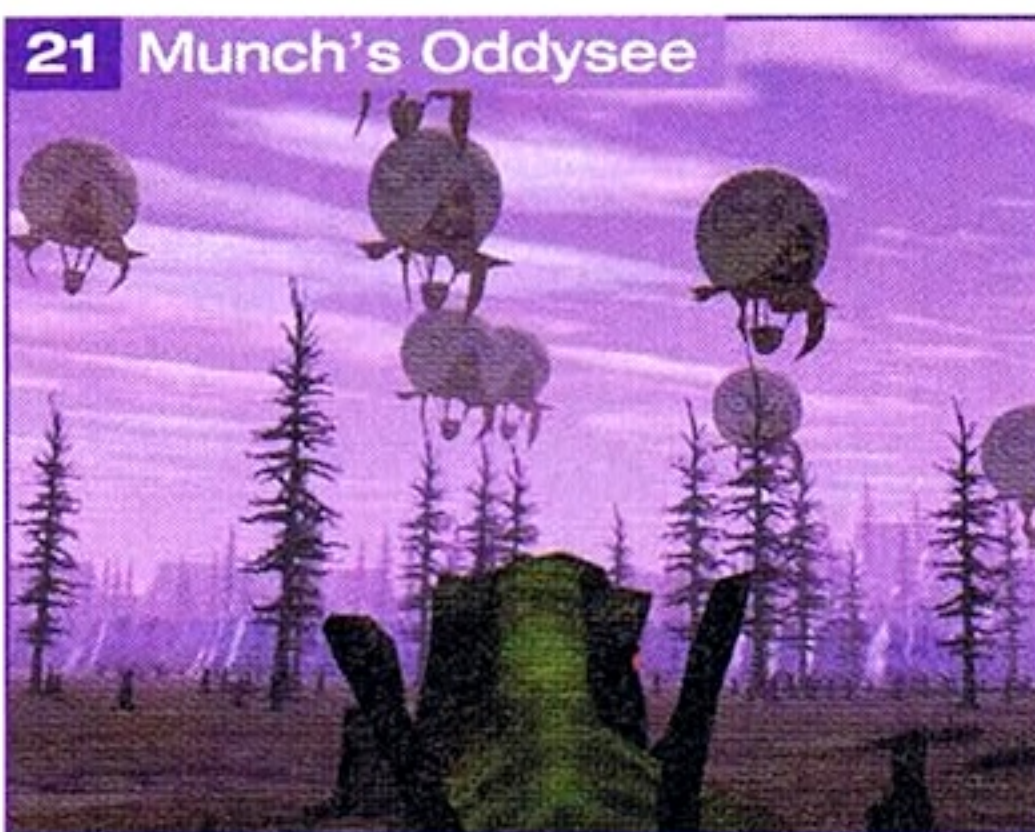
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Comprehensive instructions on how to use your FREE demo disc! This month Sled Storm, No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking, Prince Naseem Boxing and Bugs Bunny!

14 FEEDBACK

Some of our readers have questions. Some have answers. And some just want to tell us how much we are loved. All and sundry have their letters printed here.

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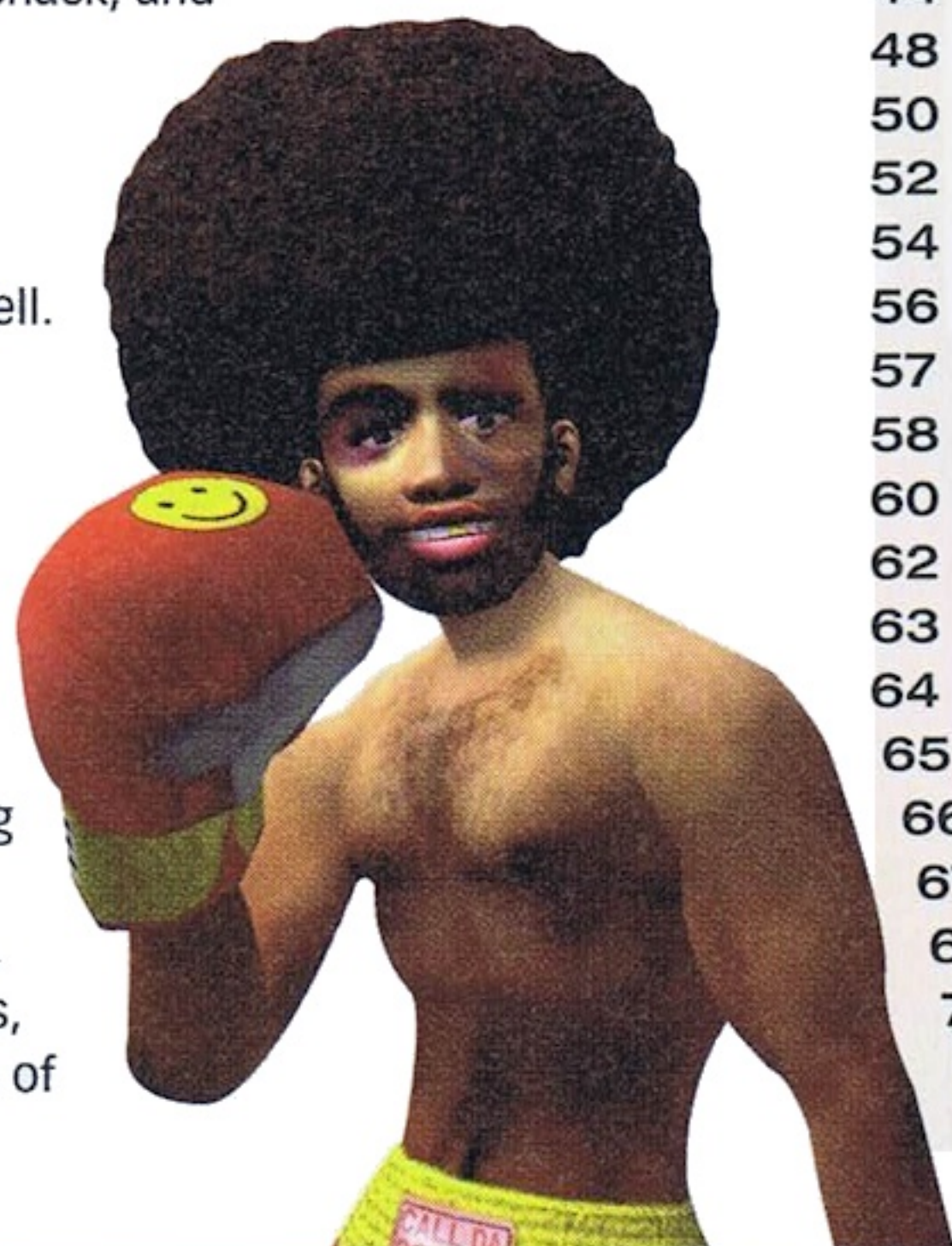
The rewards of subscribing to our magazine speak for themselves. You get it first, at a significant discount, and what's more, you can win a South Park Mega Pack, which includes a copies of South Park Rally, Chef's Luv Shack, and the South Park movie!

20 UPDATE

As more and more comes to light on the PlayStation 2, our excitement can't help but swell. We have eight pages on these and other PlayStation developments.

30 MULTIMEDIA

The PlayStation 2 won't just play games, it will also have advanced internet and movie playing capabilities. In the next century, we will find all different kinds of media and electronics merging in ways we're only just beginning to comprehend. In our new section on multimedia, we survey the thin end of the wedge, be it DVDs, consumer electronics, or even stranger gadgets of the next millennium.



32 COMPETITIONS

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34 BEST OF 1999 SURVEY RESULTS

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80 JAPANESE GAMING

This rocky archipelago in the North Pacific represents the single largest video gaming market on earth, bigger than even the US. The Japanese are game-mad, and most of the game concepts and ideas you've seen, and many you haven't, originated in the land of the rising sun. Unfortunately, they have a completely different language and culture to us, which can make importing and playing their wares immensely frustrating. Fear not, we give you a crash course in the basics of Japanese gaming.

86 HELPSTATION

Miss Nurse gets countless requests for help from struggling gamers, and does her best to help those in need. For cheats, tips and tricks, look to HelpStation for relief.

90 BUYER'S GUIDE

It's impossible to make your gaming purchase decisions based solely on the blurb on the back of the case; you need impartial testimony to the true worth of a game. The Buyers Guide compares all the recent releases, and is harsh, but fair.

96 CRITIC'S CIRCLE

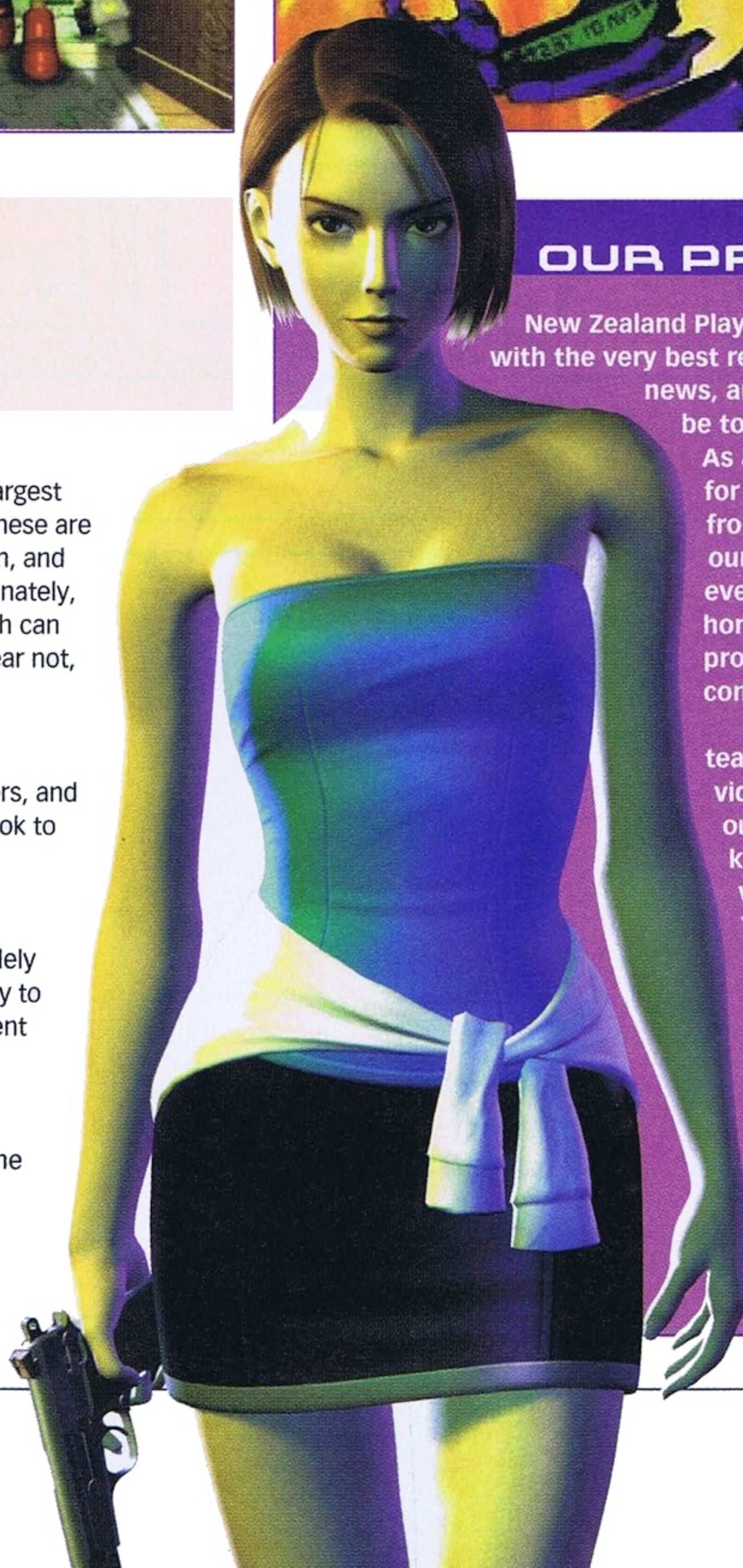
We put on our thinking caps and address the crucial issues of the day. This month we ask the question that has plagued impoverished gamefans from the beginning, are lovable iconic characters crucial to the marketability and thus survival of the gaming industry, or are they just a sick joke that cheapens the social standing of our hobby?

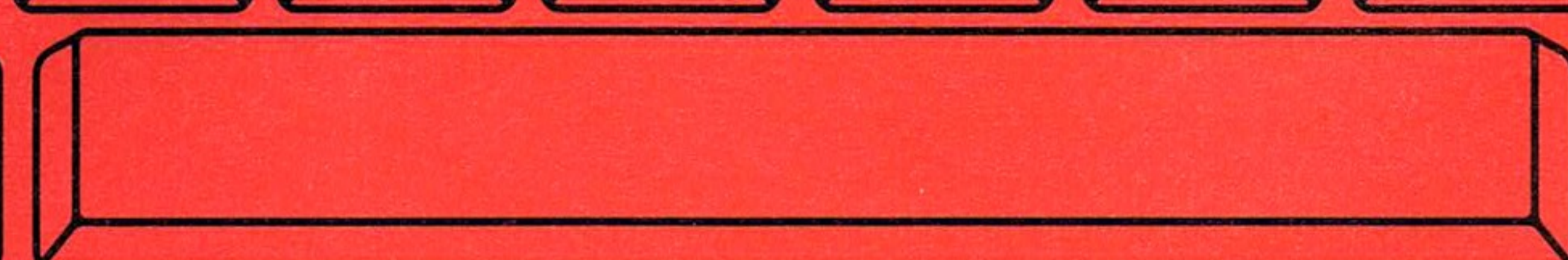
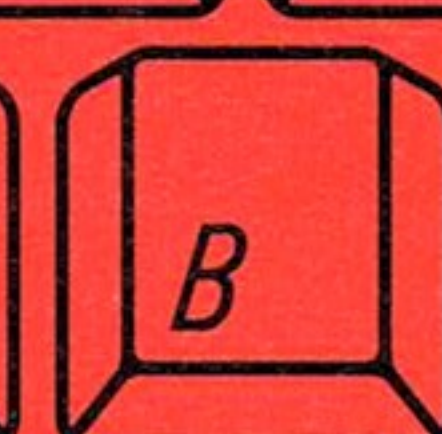
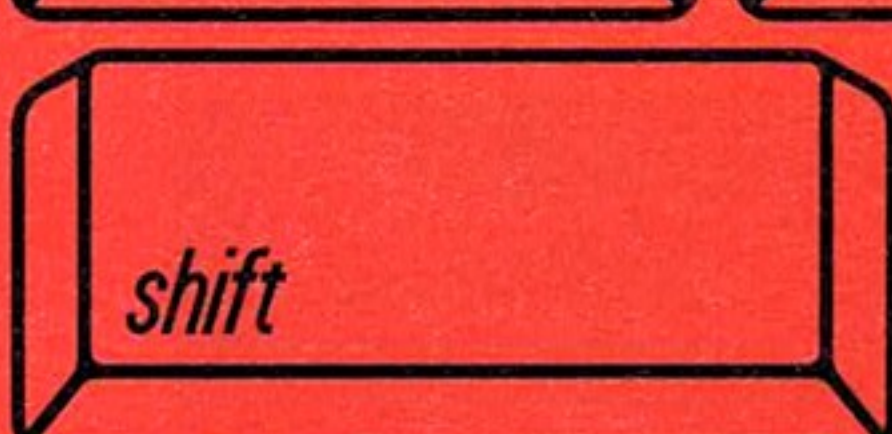
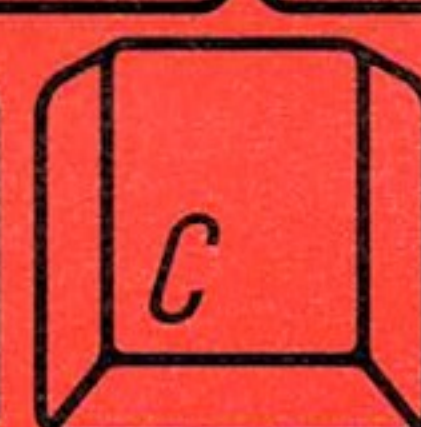
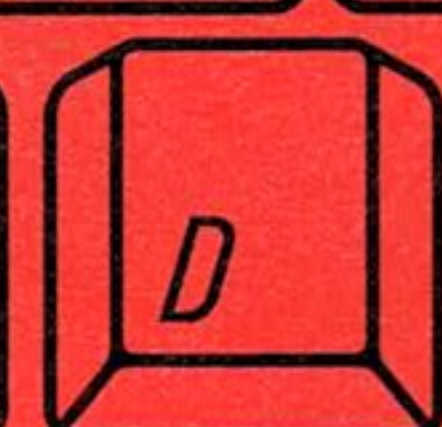
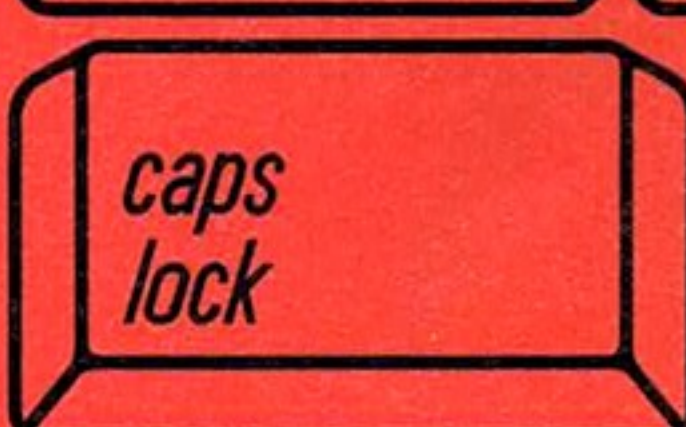
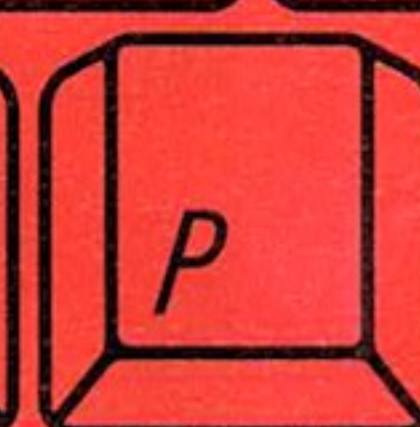
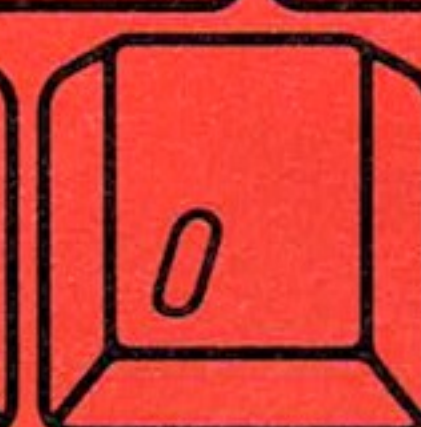
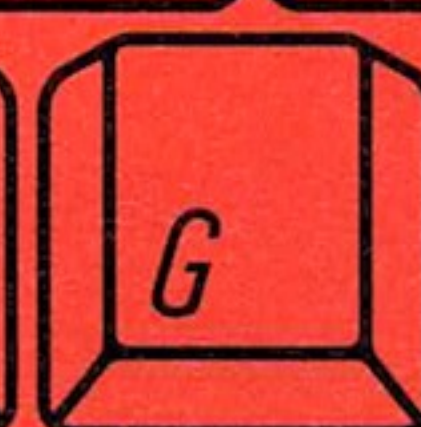
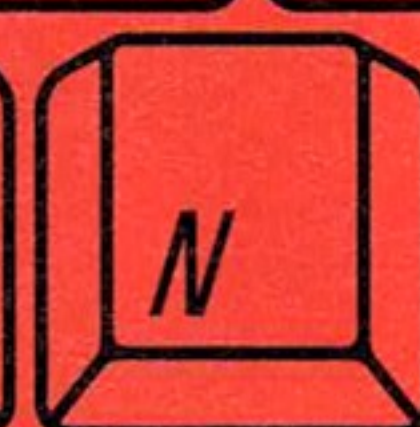
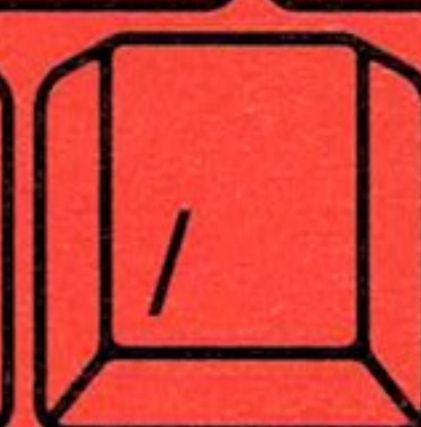
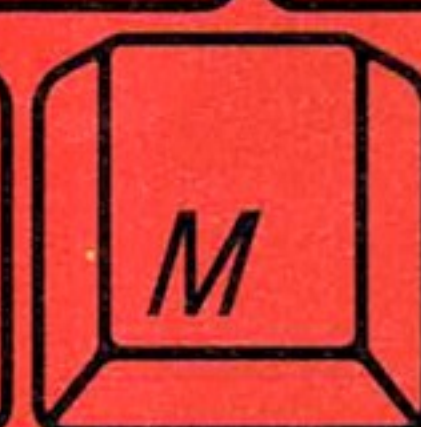
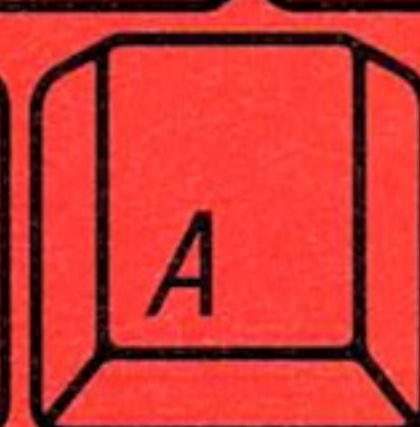
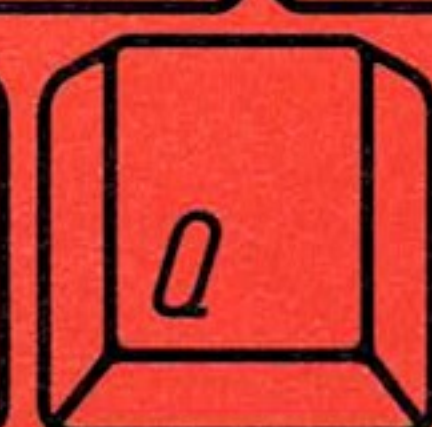
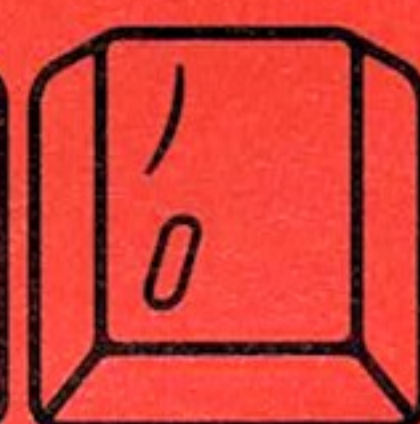
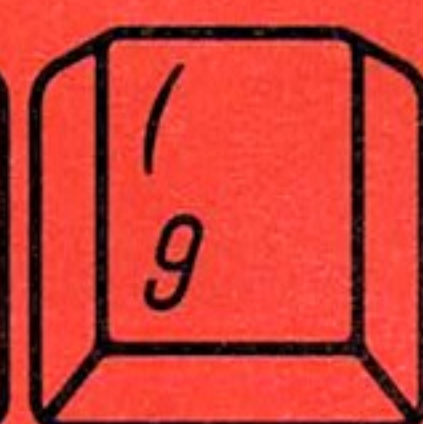
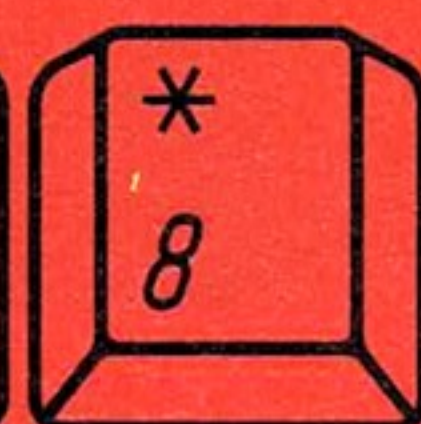
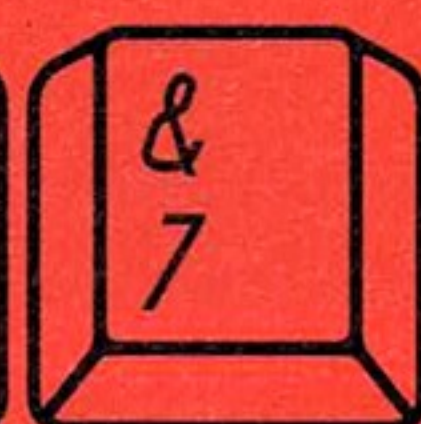
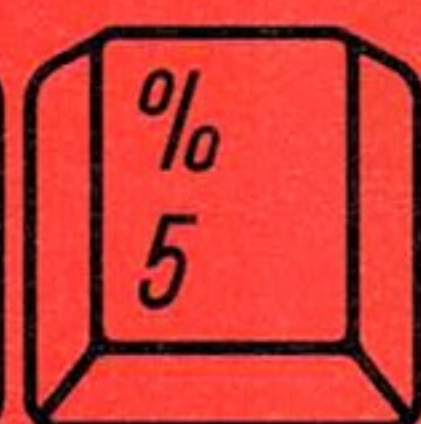
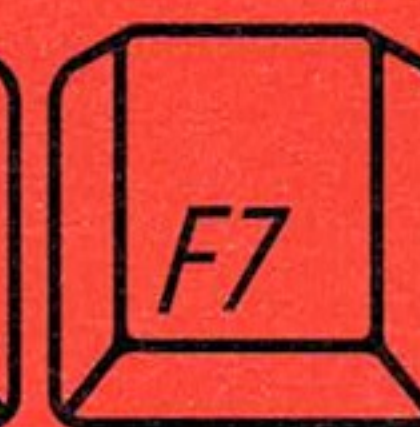
OUR PROMISE TO YOU!

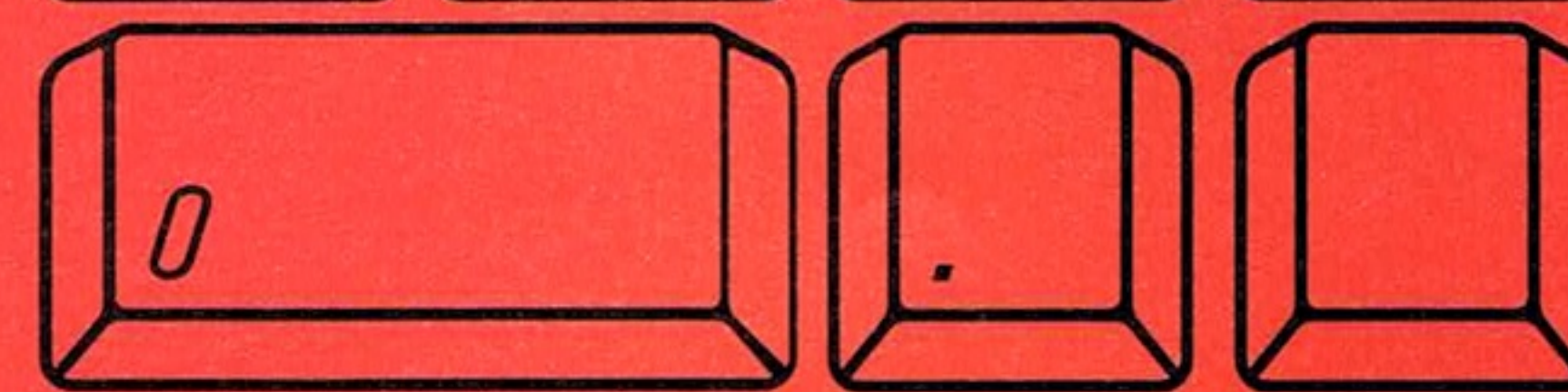
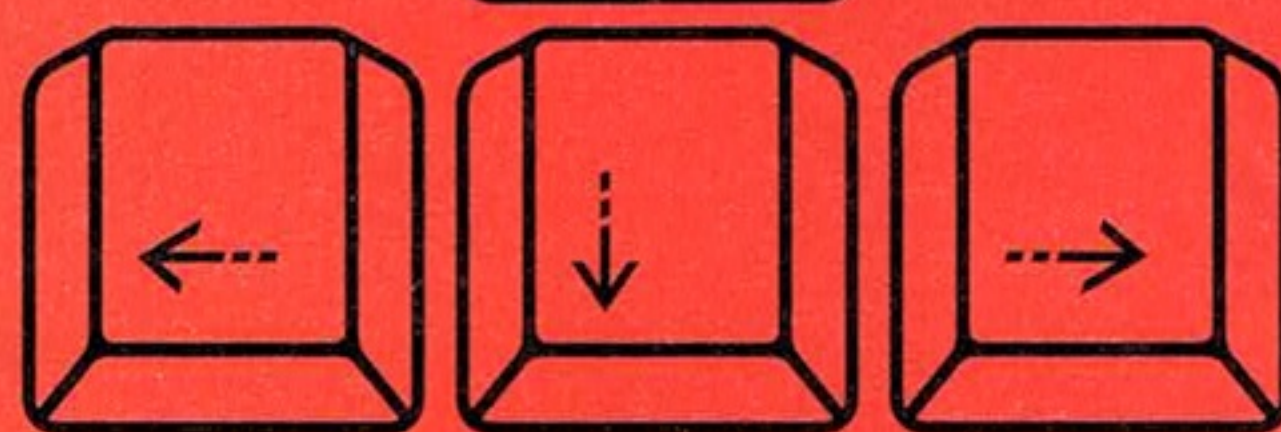
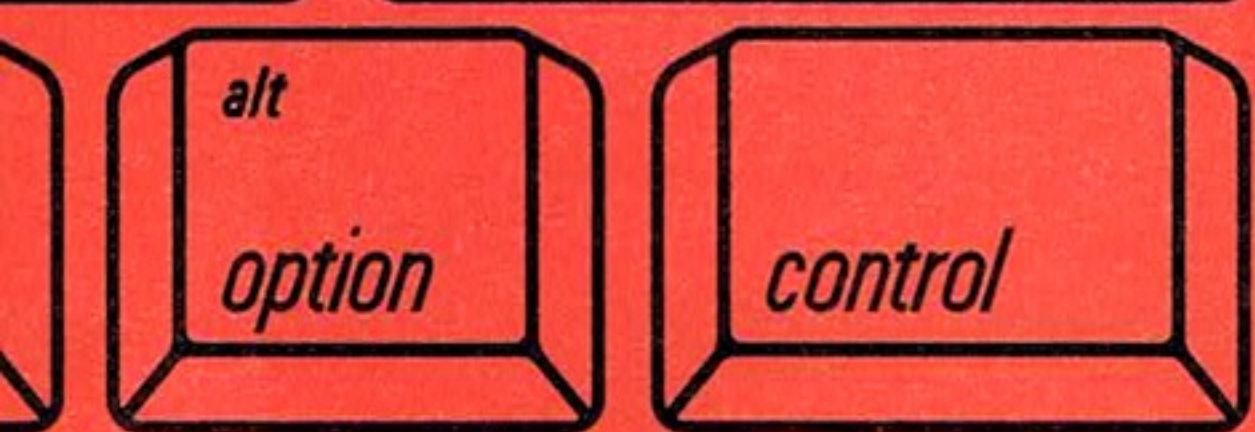
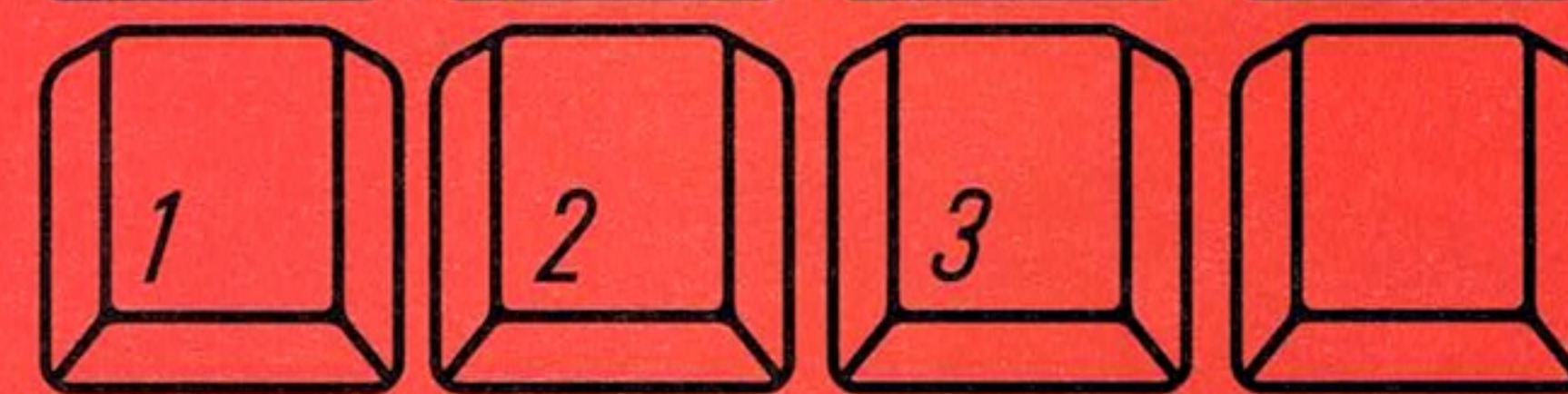
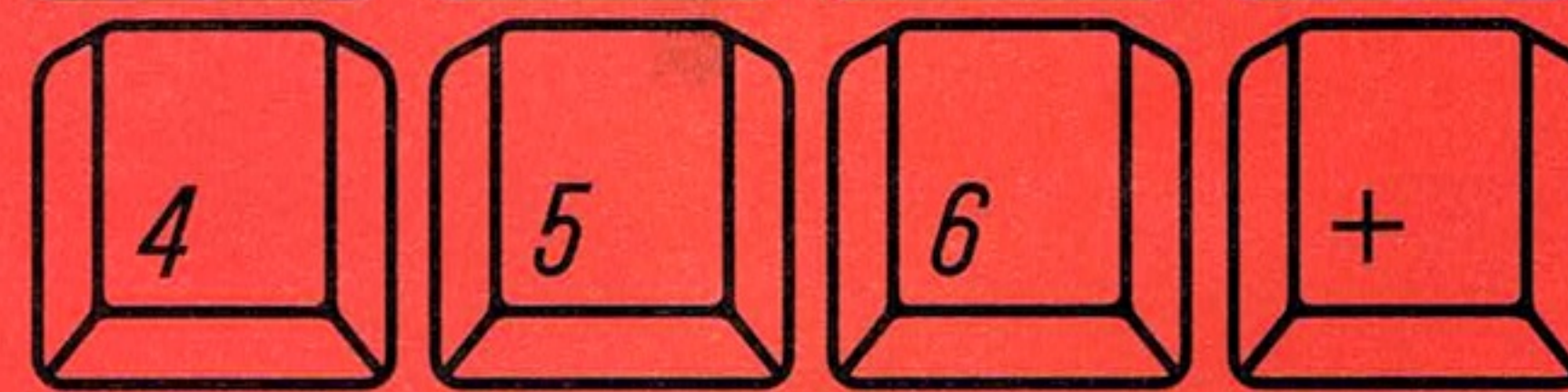
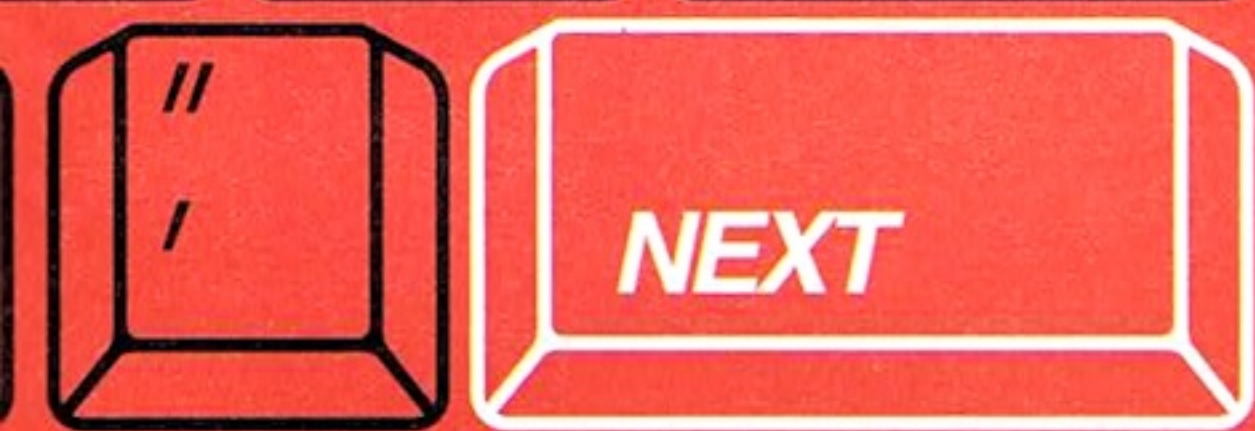
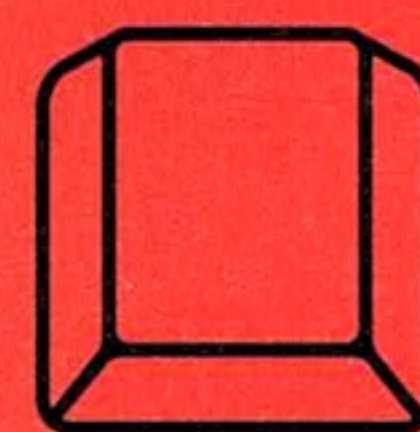
New Zealand PlayStation's mission is to provide you with the very best reviews, the most comprehensive news, and all of the information you need to be totally on top of everything PlayStation. As an unofficial magazine, we don't settle for betas, and we don't source articles from overseas. We test everything for ourselves, so you can rest assured that everything you read in this magazine is honest, unbiased, and based on the final product that you, the reader and consumer, may buy.

New Zealand PlayStation comprises a team of the most experienced videogamers in the business. We know our games. We know the technology. We know the industry. And above all else, we are gamers first, journalists second. You can trust us. You'll never find us reprinting a press release or cluttering up space with inconsequential nonsense about fashion, food, or whatnot. We're here for one thing and one thing only: interactive entertainment. We believe so strongly in how it can benefit society that there is no way we will ever sell out on you. Happy Gaming!

KEVIN CHEUNG
MANAGING EDITOR









PRO-RIDE II. GOOD CLEAN FUN.

STAY



TRUE

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Telephone 02 9288 9800

Fax 02 9281 6188

Email playstation@next.com.au

Publisher Jim Flynn <jjim@next.com.au>

Editorial

Managing Editor Kevin Cheung

<kevin@next.com.au>

Acting Editor Hillous Lesslie <hillous@next.com.au>

Staff Writer James Cottee <james@next.com.au>

Sub Editor Andrew Parsons

Contributing Writers Keith Talent, Andrew Parsons, Amos Wong, Sebastian Fern, Aaron Lai, Elton Cane, Ewan Corness

Design

Art Director Chantal Bairle <chantal@next.com.au>

Advertising

Group Advertising Manager Jo Ley

Sales Executive Kylie Evans

Advertising Production Co-ordinator

Dylan Fryer

Telephone 02 9699 0300

Fax 02 9310 2012

Managing Director Phillip Keir

Production Manager Melissa Doyle

Circulation Manager Karen Day

Finance Director Theo Fatseas

Accountant Michael Molloy

Subscription Enquiries

Telephone 02 9699 0319

Fax 02 9699 0334

Email subs@next.com.au

Print

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Fax 1300 65 0777

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For a free game, send in your suggestion for a new name for this magazine.



This is the kind of air that Hillous constantly dreams about - the air that you get in No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking...

Who's a Station player?

That busy time of year has come and gone, so now we must wait again as the ebb of games abates. Or do we? As usual, a great many games have slipped past their Christmas deadline and more still are prepared for a late release to catch the cash of those who can't go a month without buying a new round slice of black pudding for their PlayStation. If you are one of these flagrant spenders, you'd be wise to save your money for something good, instead of say, Aironauts. Two titles that we happen to KNOW will rock severely are Tenchu 2 and Spiderman, which will both take the recently established stealth genre to new heights.

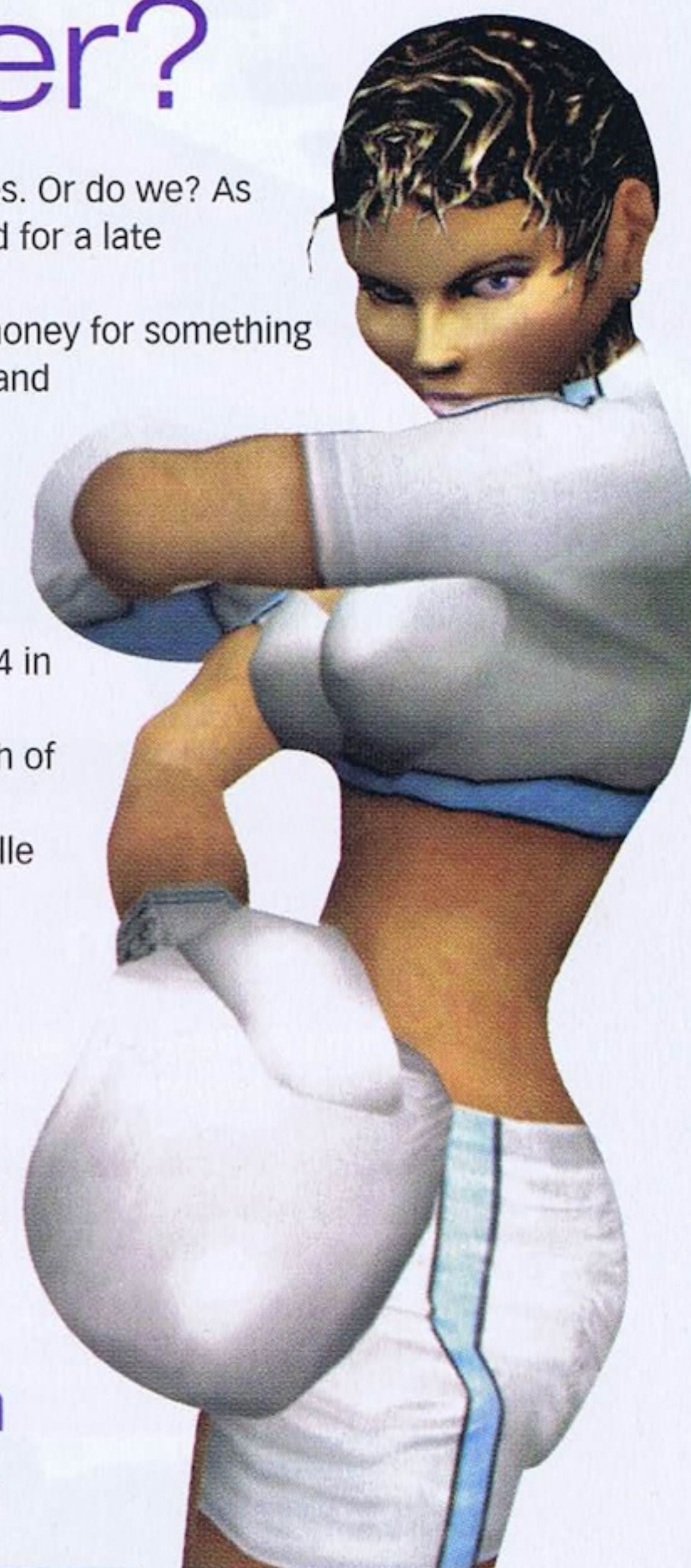


But we must be content with the present, and even now there are a few quality titles headed your way. Ready 2 Rumble is simply the most enjoyable boxer we've ever had the pleasure of playing and Ehrgeiz is finally being released unto an unsuspecting PAL-playing public. No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking embodies everything I've ever wanted in a game and Crash Team Racing is utter greatness, probably because it's just MarioKart 64 in a very thin disguise - they should have called it Crash Bandikart.

In a quite surprising change of pace, there is only one sequel in this month's bunch of reviews. Tomb Raider 4 is here to appease all you pubescent young lads, providing months of perpetual challenge for whoever has the patience. Like that guy in the Bolle ad said, Tomb Raider is really hard... especially if you are playing with one hand.

Anyway, enjoy the cover booklet and be sure to check out the new multimedia section. In it we will be covering various new aspects of PlayStation gaming such as reviews of DVD ROMs and game soundtracks. Some of it may seem a little "forward thinking" but we must bear in mind the imminence and inevitability of the PlayStation 2 in all its power.

HILLOUS LESSLIE
ACTING EDITOR



Meet the New Zealand PlayStation Team

The topic of this month's ruthless discussion is the game we hate the most



Kevin Cheung

Fluffy Animals

Platform games done for the sake of it. Can't stand them. Pick an animal, put a pair of pants on it, and voila!



Hillous Lesslie

WCW Nitro

For being unable to convincingly mimic what is already an incredibly clumsy, badly choreographed and vulgar, er, sport.



Chantal Bairle

Gex

Uncharismatic, loud, witless and just plain annoying. Besides, he can't even crawl around on the ceiling like a real gecko!



James Cottee

3Xtreme

Lame, lamer, lamest. The most exploitative and meritless game yet to pretend to give us "extreme" sports. Looks bad, plays bad.



Amos Wong

The new Frogger

With a camera angle that makes it almost impossible to see, this is a game with no discernible merits whatsoever.



Keith Talent

War Gods

For taking everything that is bad about the Mortal Kombat series and actually succeeding in making it worse.

DEMO DISC

Welcome to our independent and totally exclusive demo disc! This month, we've got a collection of some of the biggest sport-related action games out in the stores, including the awesome Sled Storm, Prince Naseem Boxing and the long-awaited No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking!



Sled Storm

Glide through the glacial slipstream in your motorised sled as you power your way through mountainous snowfields. *Sled Storm*, Electronic Art's innovative new racing game, is the first game of its kind, offering a slick combination of traditional racing and snow-related hilarity.

If you're not convinced by the possibilities behind this game, sink your teeth into our playable demo, available in this month's demo disc. For a few brief moments, you will know what it's like to charge through the snow, to soar through the frosty air and to come close to crashing into the side of a mountain.



Up to four can battle it out in the snow



Insanely big air is simply irresistible

TIPS ON SLEDSTORMING

- Follow the racing lines to optimise your racing time.
- You lose speed when you are airborne, so try to keep your sled close to the ground.
- Try navigating a path through the base of each little hill.



Go head to head in a fierce and furious two person race



Better put your spikes on...



...if you're going to rough this terrain

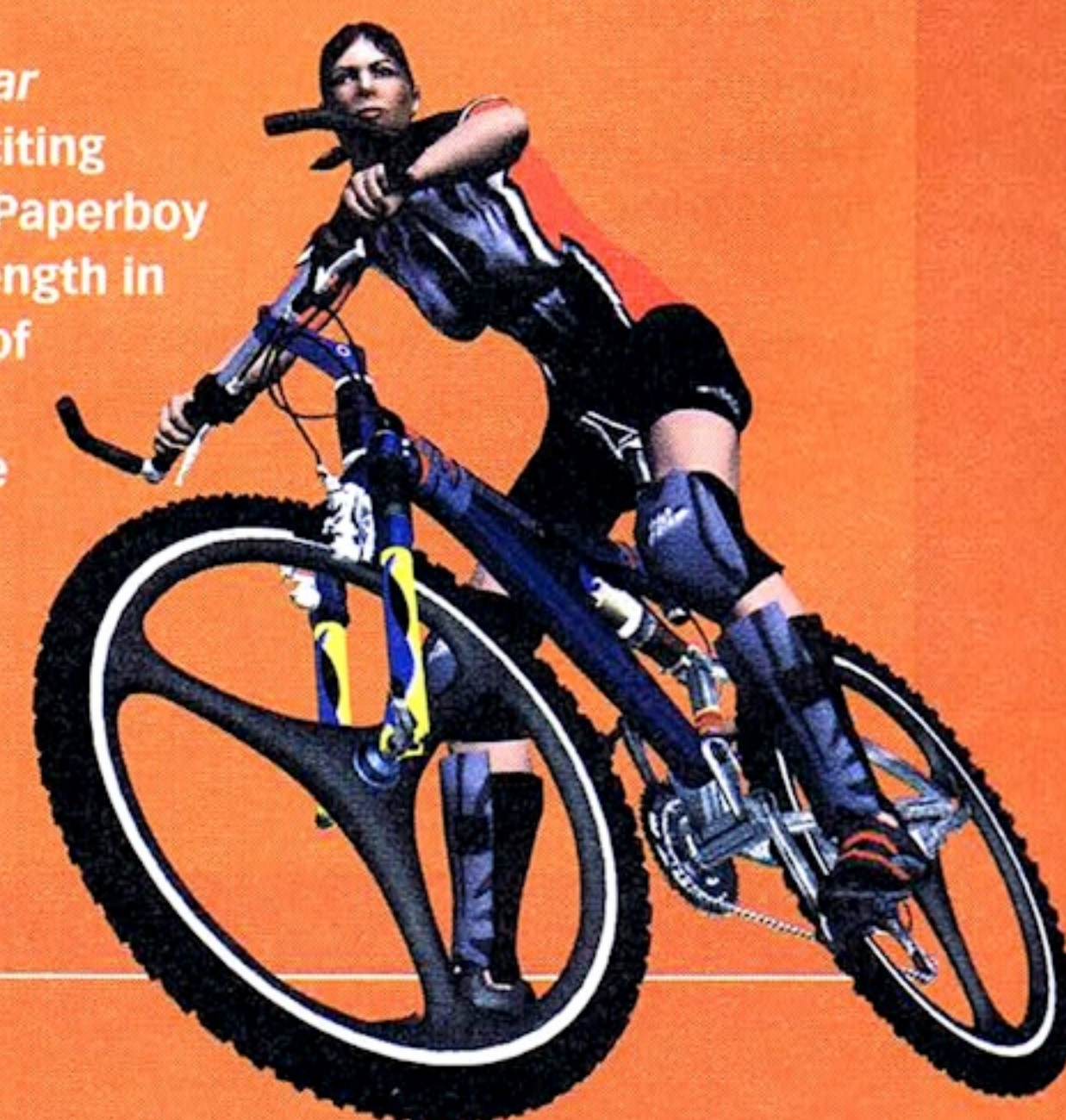
NO FEAR COMPETITION

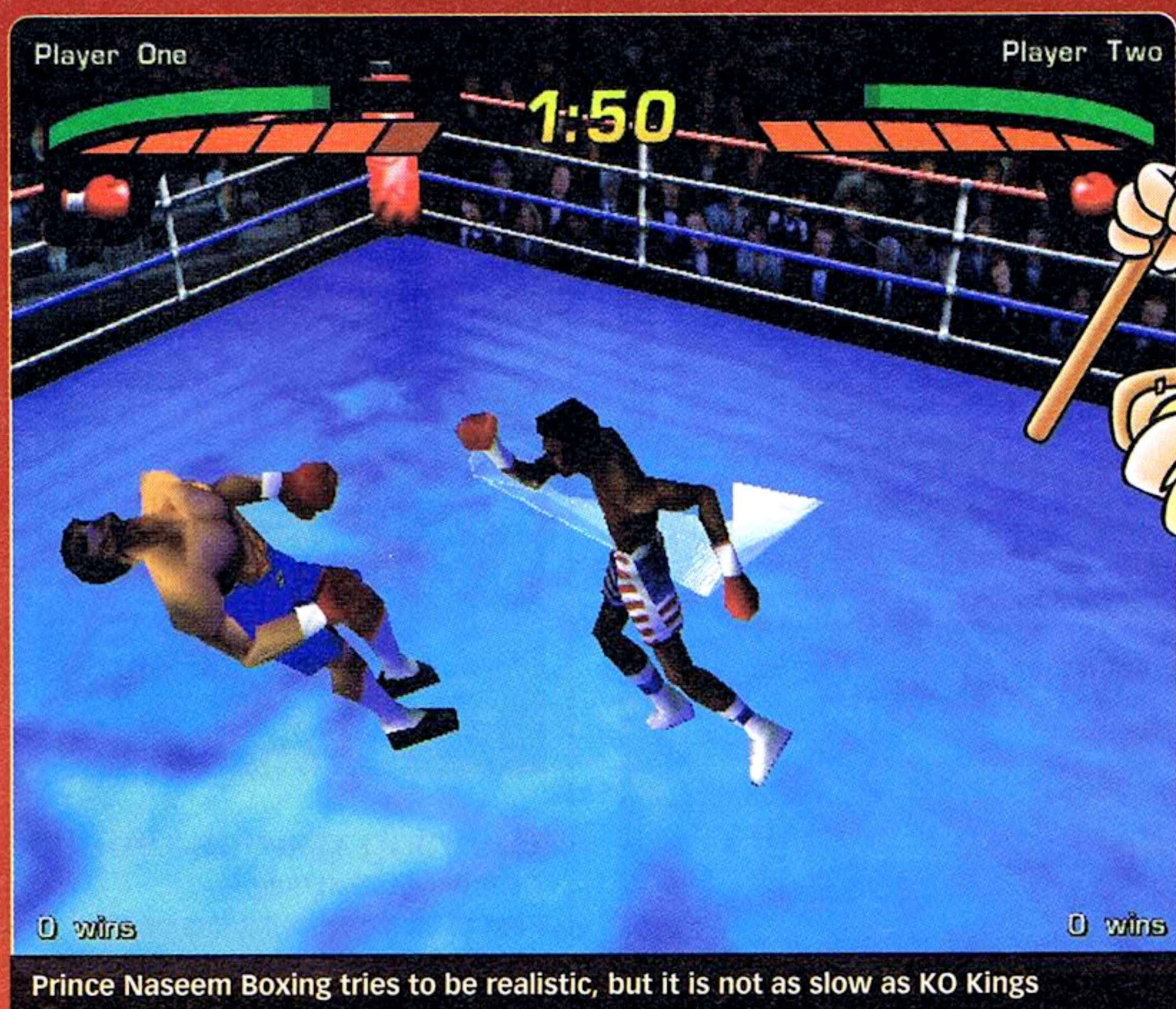
Don't forget to enter our really awesome *No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking* comp for a chance to win a copy of this fantastic game AND a Giant Team Racing jersey signed by Sean McCarroll. For more details, go to page 32!

No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking

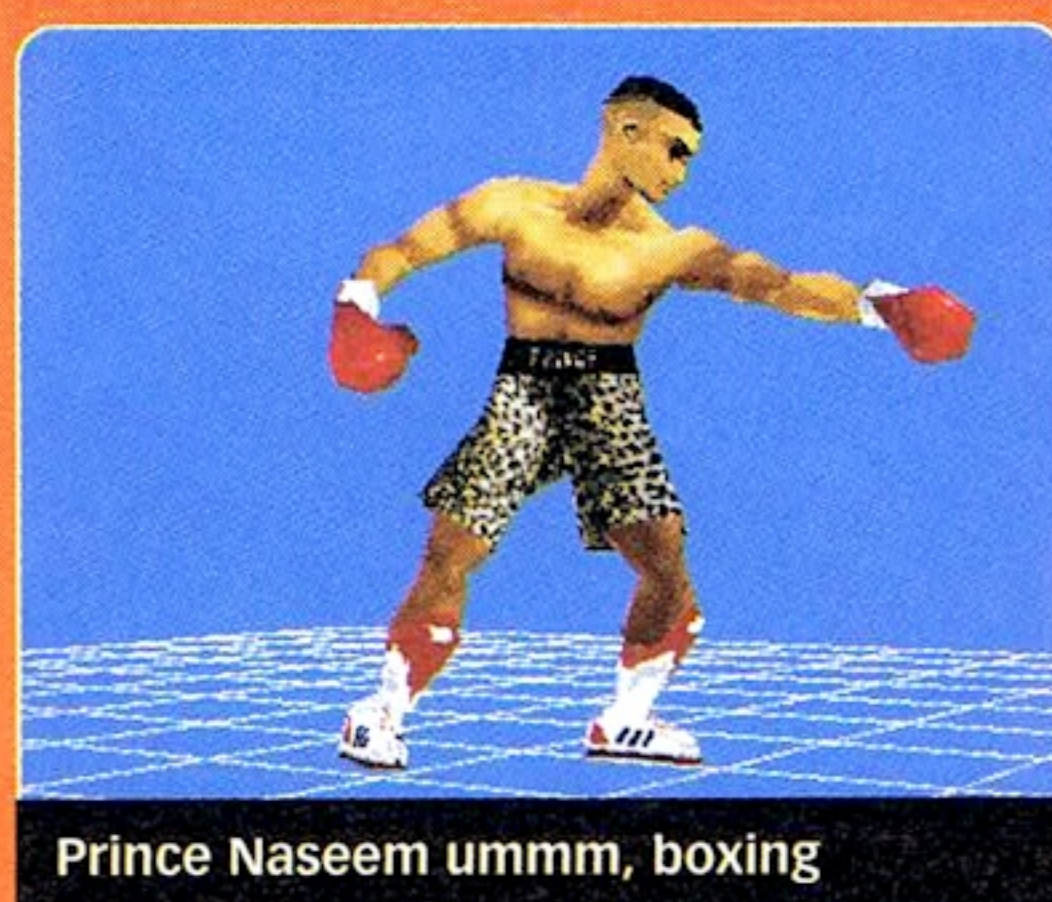
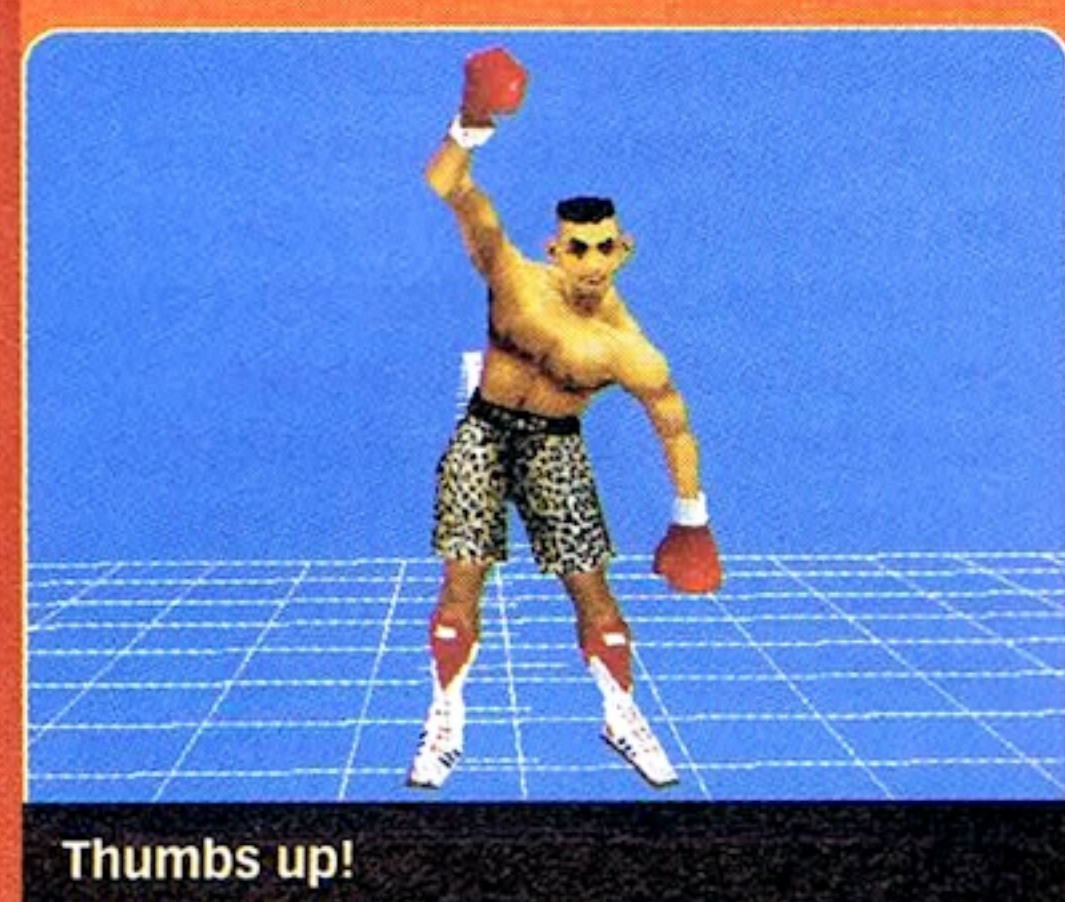
Find out what all the fuss is about: *No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking* is the most exciting bike-related videogame since the classic *Paperboy* back on the Commodore 64. Test the strength in your legs as you power through all sorts of different terrain, from rugged muddy tracks and grassy hillsides to the intricate cobblestone pathways of country towns.

In this month's demo CD, you will be able to savour some of the various delights put on offer by *No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking*.





Prince Naseem Boxing tries to be realistic, but it is not as slow as KO Kings

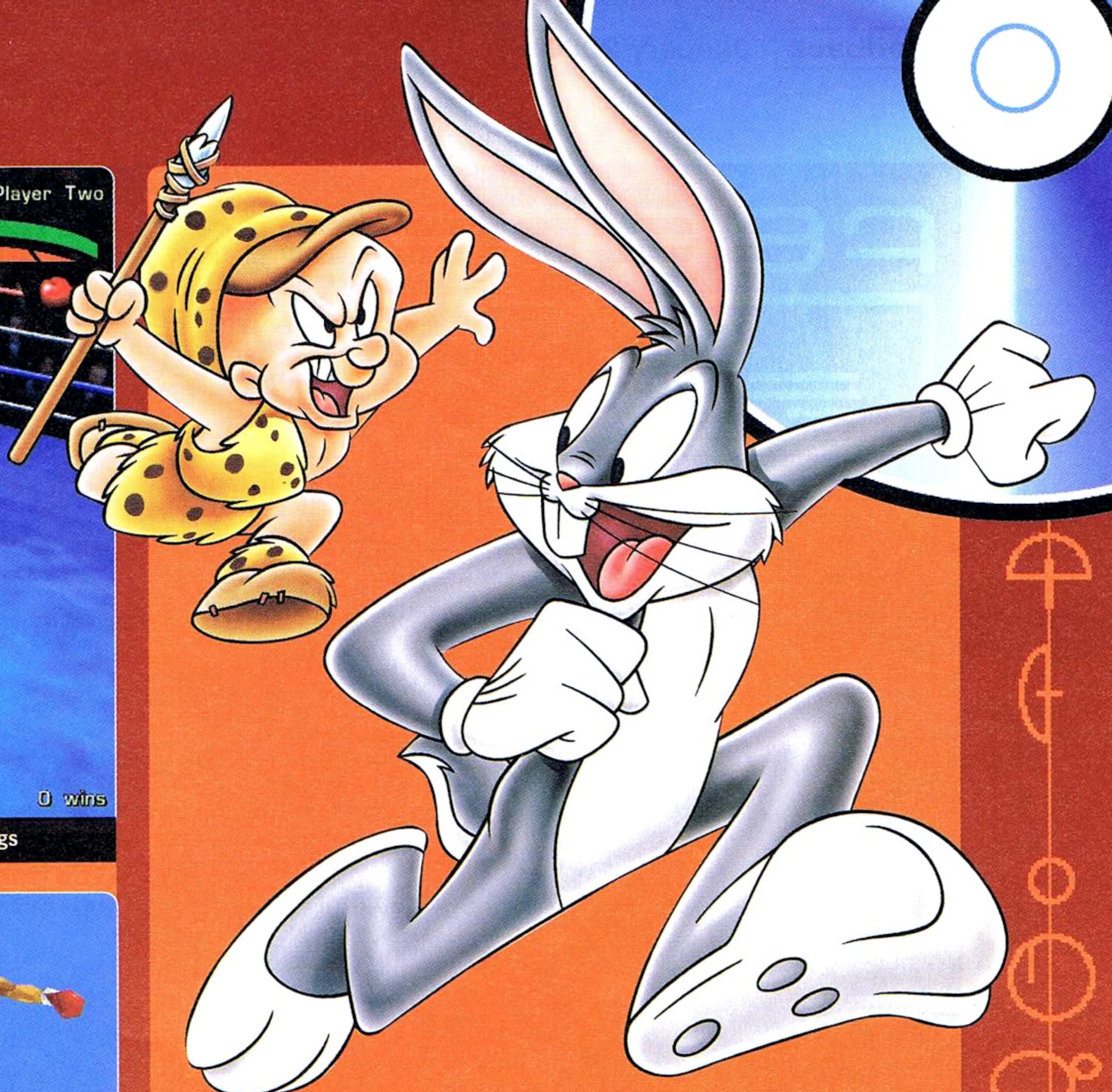
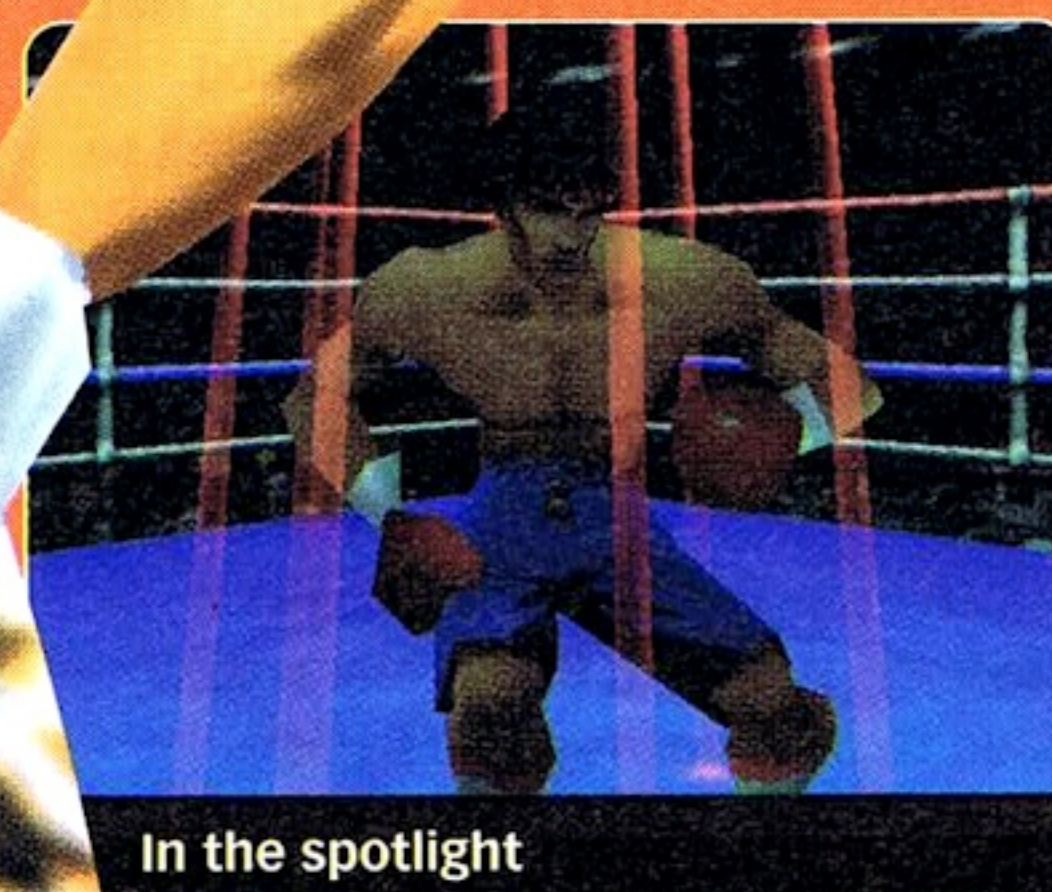


Prince Naseem Boxing

The best in boxing. *Prince Naseem Boxing* shows you how it's really done, with no fancy attacks or "special" moves to help you cheat. From the practice room to the ring, *Prince Naseem Boxing* does it the right way, more like a simulation than an arcade experience. Therefore it will take more than just luck to come out of a bout on top.

Watch and enjoy this rolling demonstration of the game. This movie will show you just how far ahead of the pack this exemplary boxer is.

This is the game that will show that not all boxers creep into your crack and strangle your gonads! (Remember Victory Boxing?)

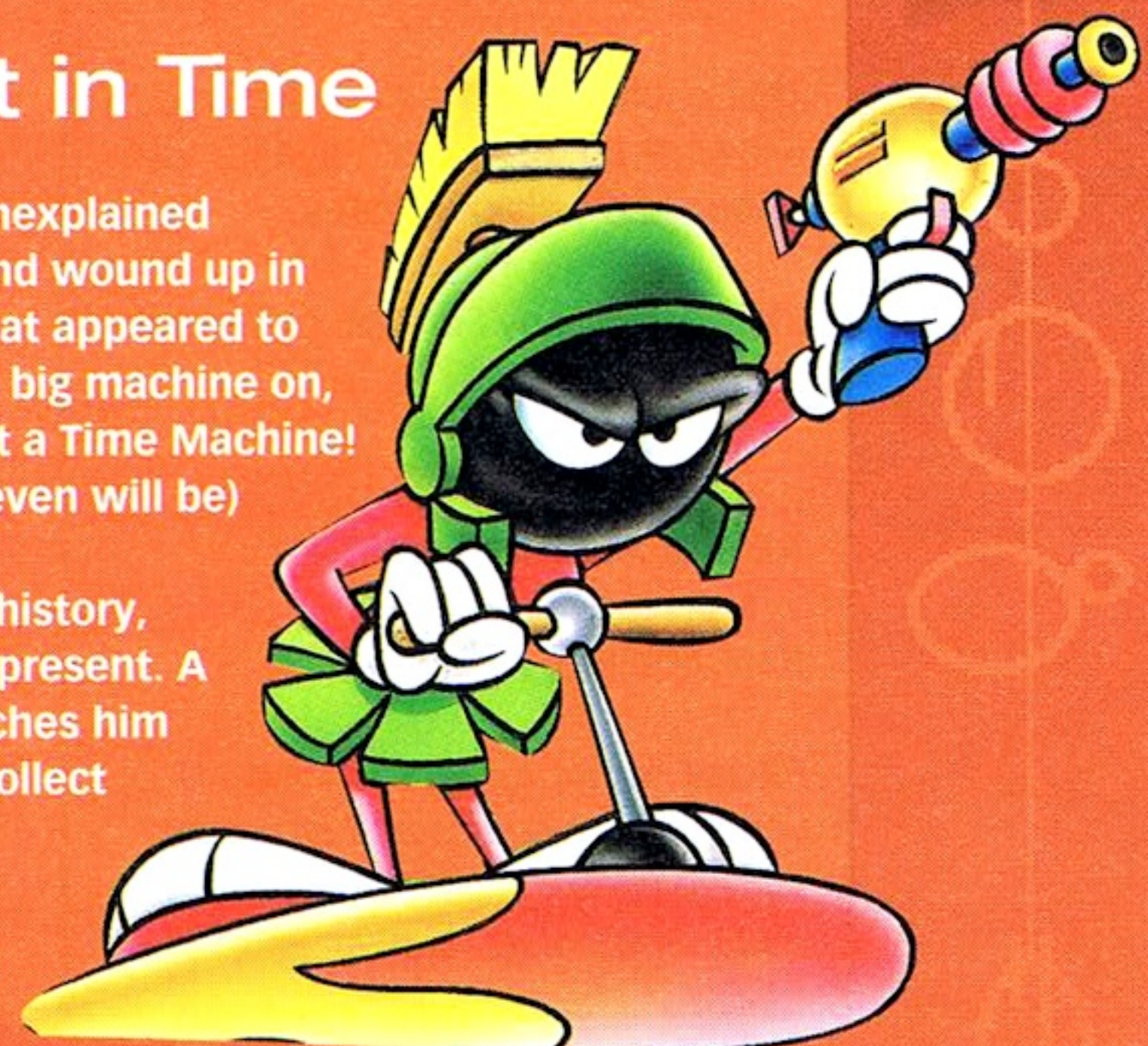


Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time

Bugs Bunny is back, after decades of unexplained absence. He took a wrong turn again and wound up in an old shed with nothing inside but what appeared to be a carrot juice dispenser. Turning the big machine on, Bugs then discovered that it was in fact a Time Machine! Now (or then) he is (or was, or maybe even will be) LOST IN TIME!

Having lost himself in the vortex of history, Bugs must now find a way back to the present. A helpful magician named Merlin approaches him with some timely advice. Bugs has to collect carrots and clocks so that he can accumulate enough time energy to transport him back to his rightful time.

Can you save the wovable wabbit?



FEEDBACK



This is where the most important people in the gaming universe (you) get to voice their opinions about games. Send in your comments, concerns and complaints to:

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PO Box 66033, Beachhaven, Auckland

Email: playstation@next.com.au or visit <http://www.hyper@ctive.com.au>

Also, each Letter of the Month will win an amazing DUAL FORCE STEERING WHEEL from Livewire!



Gauge

In this column we keep our ears peeled, our noses listening and our eyes to the grindstone to hear what you have to say.



Banning games unfair

Dear PlayStation mag,
First of all, congratulations on the great magazine. The Tony Hawk demo in issue 6 was awesome. I just wanted to say that games are too expensive unless they are Platinum.

Also, if games like Thrill Kill are too graphic for children like me, let the parents decide if their kids can buy it. I mean, what if there are adult gamers out there who want to play graphic games? Is it fair they shouldn't be able to play graphic games? Keep the mags coming.

David Yovens

The gist of the current classification system is to maintain the individual's freedom to watch whatever he or she wants,

whilst at the same time protecting people, particularly the under-aged, from material that they might not want to see.

Unfortunately, the people who legislate over these things seem to think that videogames aren't a mainstream form of entertainment in the same way as you'd watch television or the movies. They therefore see fit to ban categories of games that would otherwise get an MA15+ or R rating.

Considering the average age of a gamer is 22, then it means there are just as many 30 year olds as 12 year olds playing videogames. I hope that illustrates just how out of touch some of our legislators are with society.



Editor's Note

Trying to find yourself a copy of Wipeout 2097 to buy, but having no luck? Are PaRappa the Rapper or Bust A Groove impossible to find in your local shops?

Chances are, the game is no longer being produced, and you will only find it second hand.

That is why **New Zealand PlayStation** will start up a Traders' Page for you to buy and sell your wares.

Please send any For Sale or Wanted requests to:

TRADERS' PAGE

NEW ZEALAND PLAYSTATION

PO Box 66033

Beachhaven, Auckland

Please do not forget to include all of your contact details and also make sure to keep the submissions brief and to the point. Thanks!

Accessorising the PSX2

Dear PlayStation People,
I just recently bought my PlayStation and I like just about everything about it except that it doesn't have built-in memory. My old Sega Saturn did. Well, here are my questions:

[1.] Is the PlayStation 2 going to have built in memory? If not, can you use your old memory cards on the new console?

[2.] Can you use your old accessories on the PlayStation 2?

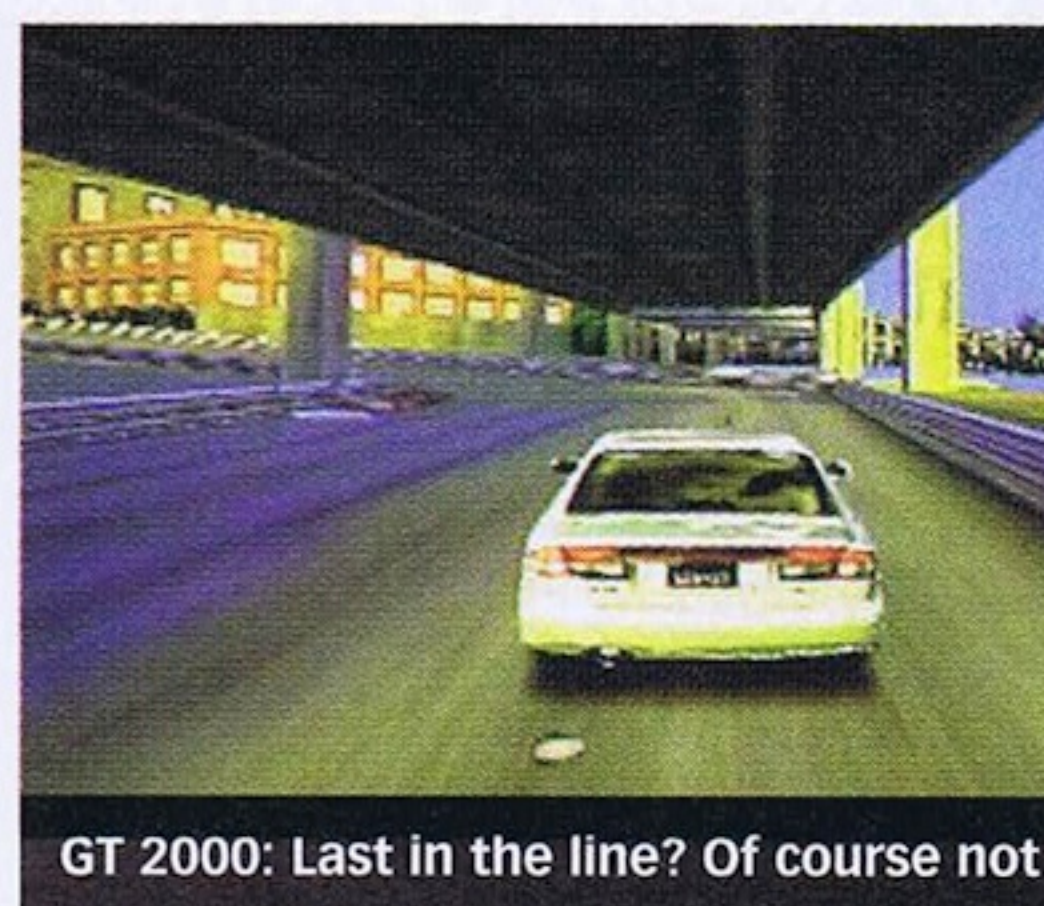
[3.] When will the PlayStation 2 be released in New Zealand?

[4.] Is there ever going to be a Gran Turismo 3 game released after Gran Turismo 2?

[5.] Are there ever going to be more South Park games after South Park Rally? If so, what kind of games will they be?

Thomas Voigtlander

[1.] The PlayStation 2 won't have its own built in memory, but it will make use of 8MB memory cards, which are quite comparable. Sony have also expressed an intention to make a hard drive for the PlayStation 2. Your old PlayStation memory cards can be used in the new system, but it will only work for the old PlayStation games.



GT 2000: Last in the line? Of course not



[2.] As above, your old PlayStation peripherals will work on the PlayStation 2, but they won't be compatible with PlayStation 2 games.

[3.] Sony of New Zealand haven't finalised any dates yet, but you can be certain that it will be in late 2000.

[4.] Well actually, there is going to be Gran Turismo 2000 for the PlayStation 2. Sony haven't planned any other GT games beyond that.

[5.] There might be, depending on the success of the games. The original South Park wasn't all that flash anyway, so South Park Rally would have to be great for there to be any definite future in the franchise, at least for videogames.

Censoring Nude Lara

Dear Editor,
I was absolutely appalled by the November issue of New Zealand PlayStation. On the front cover, you had a naked woman on the cover with nothing more than her panties on, and on the back page you print a similarly naked woman in a highly provocative pose. Surely, this is not appropriate considering that I have to buy your magazine for my 8 year old step-son!

A concerned mum

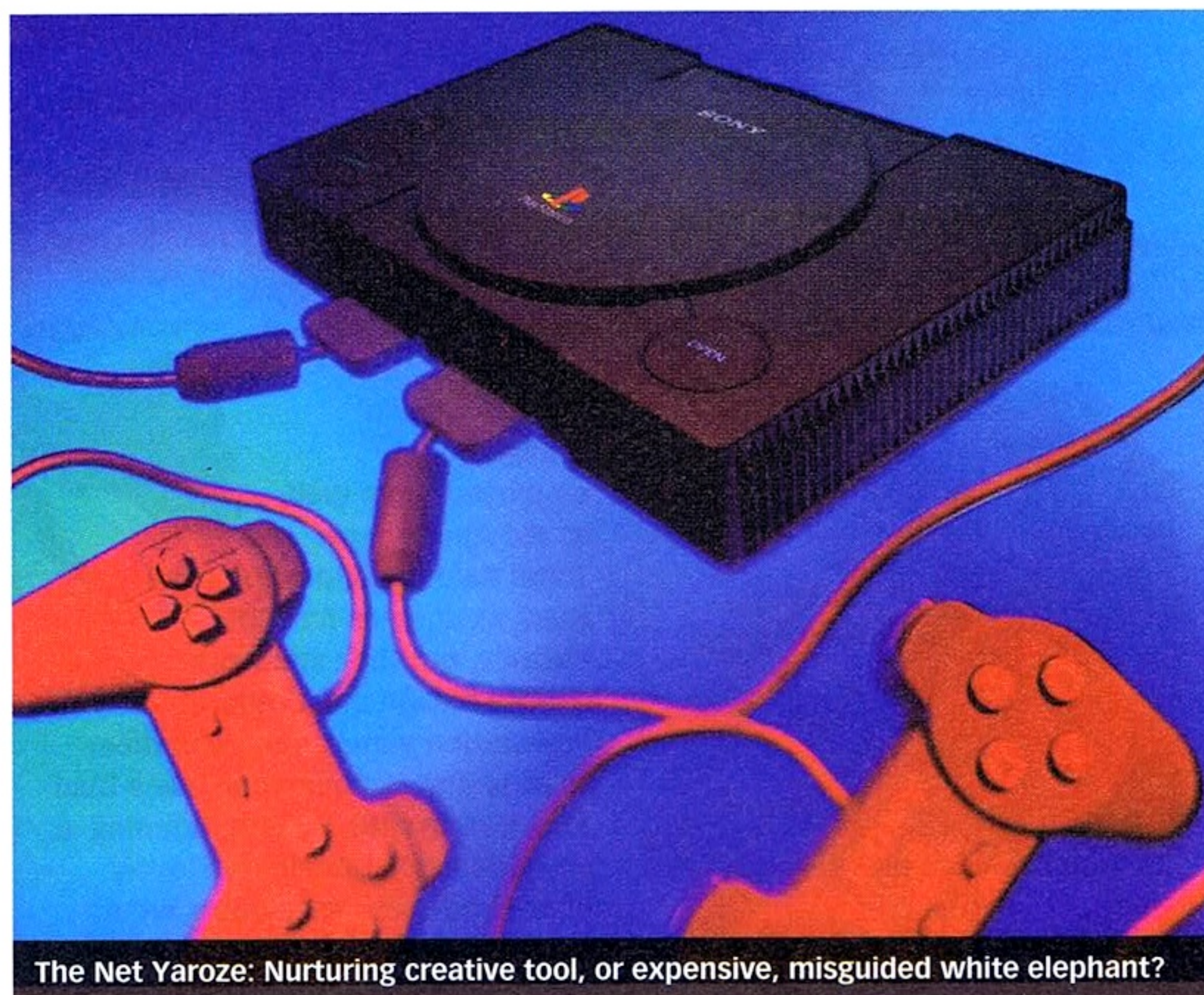
On one hand, while we do appreciate the serious nature of your concerns, we find it a tad odd that even when you found the front cover offensive to your personal standards, you nevertheless bought the magazine!

What happened to the idea that you have a freedom to choose what you are exposed to? What happened to the concept of a parent taking responsibility for his or her child?

You could very easily have avoided the grief by not purchasing an item that you clearly foresaw would offend you. Should we take this as an example in support of why we SHOULD be banning certain videogames? I certainly hope not.

On the other hand, in this day and age, it's difficult to please every person in such a broad market. Things that appeal to the teens and 20-somethings won't necessarily appeal to the under-10s. We nevertheless try to tailor the magazine to suit as many people as possible whilst at the same time offending the least number of sensibilities.

However, Lara Croft is one of the most recognised videogame characters in the industry, and her use of sex appeal as a marketing tool is no secret to anyone. And in spite of what anyone may think of the image, it's worth bearing in mind the images were created and approved by Core.



The Net Yaroze: Nurturing creative tool, or expensive, misguided white elephant?



Terra Incognita. Made on Yaroze



The Yaroze is Useless!

Hi, I love your mag. I'm a first time writer, and I would like to ask some questions. PLEASE answer them.

[1.] Why is there so much crap and boring games made by Net Yaroze? I mean, to me, they haven't made a single game worth bothering about.

[2.] Is Gran Turismo really what it's chalked up to be? I enjoy some racing games, but not a lot, so I'm wondering if the game is very good.

[3.] What is the percentage likelihood of a letter being published?

[4.] Which is better? PSX or N64?

[5.] Last of all, why will the PSX 2 be so much better than the original? Well I guess that's it,

Ironman

[1.] The Net Yaroze was designed to encourage people to test their creative skills and make games of their own. If every Tom, Dick and Harry knew how to make a game, it would put half the developers in the industry out of work.

Fortunately, they don't. It's worth remembering these Yaroze games are made by your average Joe (or Jane) who has no professional training, so it's a surprise that games like Devil Dice - which we consider to be one of the greatest puzzle games created - can be produced through the Yaroze.

[2.] Gran Turismo is inherently a racing simulation game. If you are not into cars or racing games, then chances are that you won't like Gran Turismo. That's not to say that Gran Turismo is bad - it's actually one of the best in the market.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

This month's winner receives a Dual Force Steering Wheel!



Where are the new ideas?

I know this is a tired old topic, but I'm just sick to death of the overwhelming unoriginality in games lately. And by lately, I don't mean last week, but the last four years.

In the PlayStation's first year of release, it had some pretty awesome games coming out with new concepts to greet the consoles new powers. However, as time dragged on, there arose a few set genres to which all new releases clung. Now, every single game that hits the markets falls neatly into a category which is already filled with prime product. They are all racing, fighting, shooting, platform jumping and sports simulations, with greater and greater emphasis going into the 'realism' of the game.

Developers wake up! Sure, you can make some money from a recognised genre, but who are you impressing? What ideas are you inspiring? The only truly innovative and creative games to have come out lately are Kurushi, Grand Theft Auto (1 & 2), Tenchu, Tony Hawk's Skateboarding and Devil Dice.



GTA2. Innovative. Distinct. Fun

Shiny's Stuntcopter looks interesting but I haven't seen it in the shops, probably because it is a bit 'different'.

We should be investing large quantities of capital in the design of new games which take advantage of the fact that, in a videogame, anything can happen. Squaresoft rule for this. They can make a new kind of game and it will sell, because everyone trusts their stuff.

Plant seeds and trees will grow.

Pat Saunders



Well put, Pat. We think you hit the nail on the head when you wrote "you can make some money from a recognised genre" and it is that exact reason that most developers prefer to play it safe when designing a game. We too feel a yen for something different, something more, and the thrill of a new type of game that plays well is beyond expression.

However, the main reason nothing unique is coming out is due to the fact that games play on our most basic instincts. A

videogame is a way to pass time, and is therefore about nothing, so to fill this void they need a purpose.

The things that get us going (like speed and violence) have been done, and there's no way to make a realistic game about eating, sleeping or other such tactile pastimes.

Still, we agree whole-heartedly that there is a lot of ground to be (dis)covered yet. The stealth genre is a new one that has grown rapidly since its pioneers last year. Metal Gear: Special Missions and Tenchu 2 are testament to that fact.

FREAKY QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Throw a sharp query at us and you could win one of these ----->



The joysticks are buttons, too!

Dual Potential

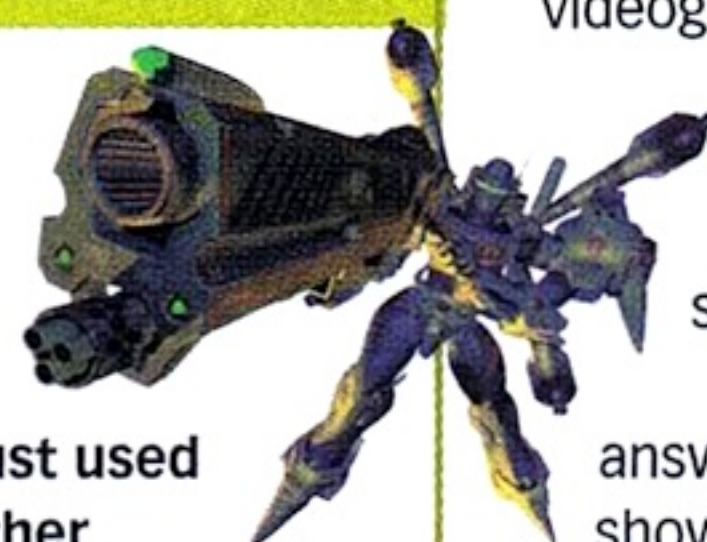
Why do hardly any developers make use of the L3 and R3 buttons on the Dual Shock controller? They are so cool and they could be used in ways that are unheard of!

Tilly Wester

Yes, they could. Omega Boost employed them well, as did Ape Escape. Tomb Raider 3 and 4 just used them as doubles for other buttons, but they still work.

The reason most other PlayStation games don't use them at all is that not everyone has a Dual Shock controller. By programming a game to exploit these two lovely click-in buttons, developers would be excluding a large portion of their intended market.

On the other hand, using them to double as other buttons is almost pointless. It's a sad tale of a brilliant peripheral that was released too late in the PlayStation's life.

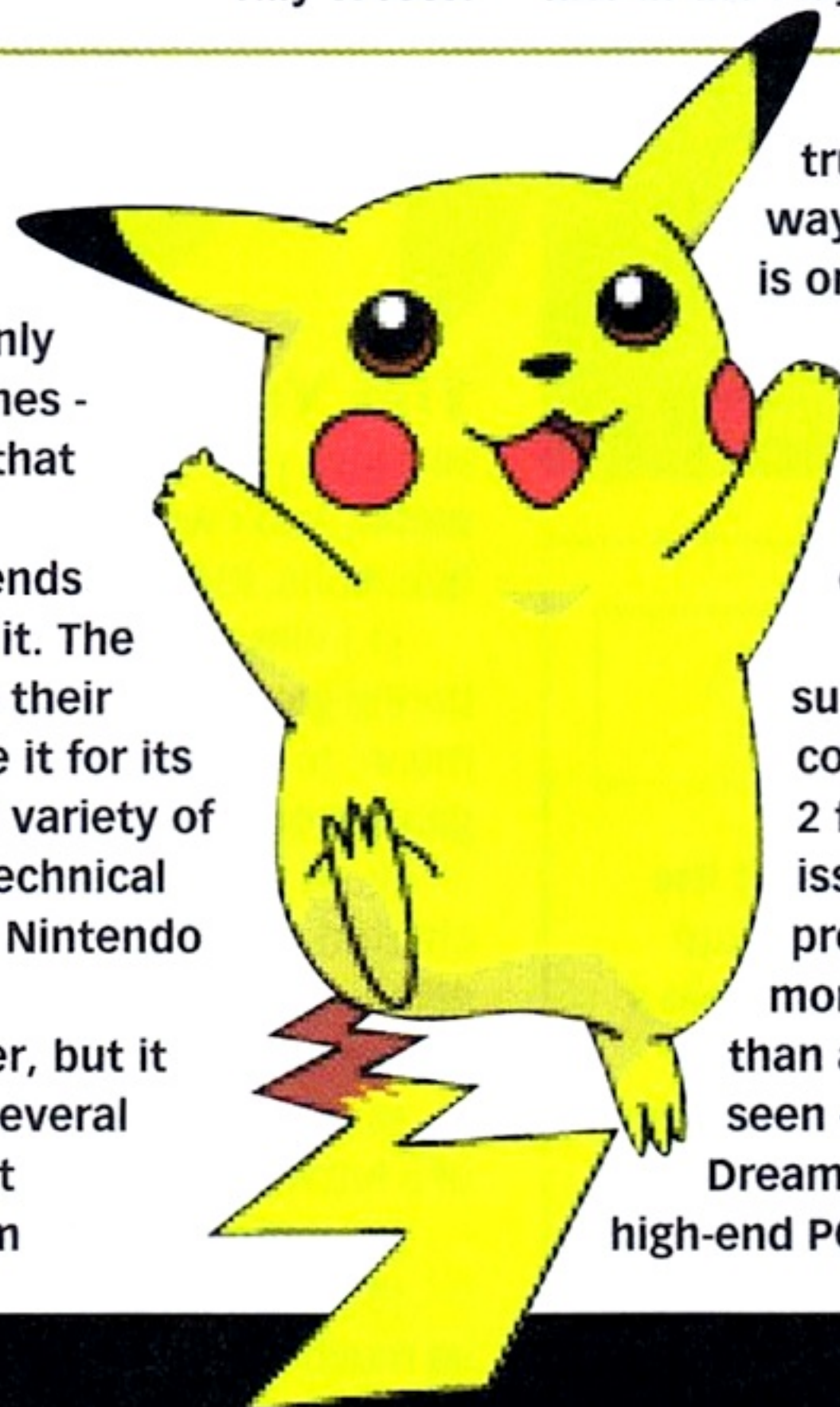


[3.] We get bags and bags of letters every month and we only print the good ones - that is the ones that we like.

[4.] It all depends how you look at it. The people who love their PlayStations love it for its accessibility and variety of games. From a technical perspective, the Nintendo 64 has superior processing power, but it is hampered in several crucial areas that prevented it from

truly taking off in any big way. Massive over-filtering is one thing that comes to mind. Lack of games and the kiddy-value of all of those games is another thing that comes to mind.

[5.] To rather briefly summarise our comprehensive PlayStation 2 feature from last month's issue, it has got more processing power and more graphical features than any system we have ever seen - including the Dreamcast and some of the high-end PCs available now.



PlayStation 2 will generate graphics superior to anything yet seen on a console

Where's the anime?

I was really really sad after reading Feedback Q&A in issue 7. I loved everything about that issue (especially the sexy cover), but the one thing that let me down was the letter from the Benson Boys asking about anime videogames. Is it true that we are missing out on anime games? Just how many are there? How come our local industry doesn't support anime games?

I really need to know the answers because I've been following shows like Voltron and Sailor Moon and Pokemon since I was little, and I need to know what I'm missing out on.

Tuxedo Mask

Glad to see you are a little more open-minded about our cover than the Concerned Mum. As far as anime games go, you'll find that you'll only find them in Japan. Only very rarely do they ever surface in English. It's not quite so much that you get games "based on" anime series themselves.

Anime is a form of Japanese pop-culture which can lead to anime-looking games. For instance, even though a popular anime like Ghost in the Shell might spawn an equally popular game, you can also get an equally popular game like PaRappa the Rapper which has a degree of Japanese influence, but is not based on any anime.

This is much in the same way as you'd get an action game like Syphon Filter, which "looks" like a Schwarzenegger film, but isn't.

Why isn't our local industry supporting such games? Well, it really comes down to culture. The average Westerner enjoys a good bit of action, some fighting, lots of guns, fast cars, and a good dose of sport - basically everything you see on your local TV. Your basic Japanese dating simulation like Tokimeki Memorial just doesn't fit any of those moulds.



Anime - Ghost in the Shell



Non Anime - PaRappa the Rapper

Gauge

When concerned citizens ask questions about the new Oddworld games, we answer.



Dreaming of Oddworld

Please answer my questions, because every other damned magazine won't and you seem to have a good reputation.

[1.] Is NBA Live 2000 coming out soon and is it the best so far? What are some of the features?

[2.] When is Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee due for release and what's the new game engine like?

Concerned Citizen

[1.] NBA Live 2000 is on shelves as we speak, and it's easily the best that EA have ever produced. Aside from the usual sim upgrades, it's also got Michael Jordan and a streetball mode.

[2.] Munch's Oddysee is currently under development for the PlayStation 2, but a release date hasn't been finalised yet. The folks over at Oddworld Inhabitants have been pretty vocal about how they've always wanted to do real time 3D.

After all, Lorne Lanning and Sherry McKenna did start out doing CG animations before setting up Oddworld. So with that in mind, you are more than likely to see an unprecedented level of

detail that would make a 3D Oddworld game every bit as atmospheric as the 2D Oddworld games available already.





You could hear the gears whirring in their heads when the boys at Core Design developed Tomb Raider 4. Still, it's pretty good

Syphon Filter Rip-Off

I just bought myself Syphon Filter, and I've got to say that it's the biggest pile of tosh I've ever played in my life! I don't care how smoothly it runs, I don't care how well executed it is - the game just reeks of a copycat. Think about it.

It plays exactly like Tomb Raider, has a few of the ideas from Tenchu: Stealth Assassins, and it cashes in on the espionage theme of Metal Gear Solid. All of them were great games of their own right, and Syphon Filter blatantly rips every single one of them off!

Can't anyone else see this? Can't anyone get sued over this? I just want my damned money back!

Jerry McKimson

It is really unfortunate that you should see it that way, because Syphon Filter is a pretty fine game of its own right. It's only when you start buying every game under the sun and start comparing them all to



Syphon Filter. Not original, but not bad

each other that you start to see some of the cracks in creativity.

Even then, is it so wrong that one gains fame and fortune by standing on the shoulders of another? You cry "copycat" when in fact a game like Syphon Filter goes beyond and elaborates on many of the ideas from the games you've mentioned.

Some would say this is an inventive step that deserves credit of its own right. After all, if the "improvements" were that plainly obvious, then they would have been implemented into the older game, wouldn't they?

In any case, there is a relatively simple way of avoiding any future grief of a similar nature: try before you buy. Or rent it if you can.

Start which Tomb Raider?

Hello dudes at PlayStation Mag. I'd just like to say first how much I enjoy



If you liked No. 2, Crash 3 will impress

reading your mag. It's the only magazine I read and I'm not ashamed of it. I live in Denmark (must be one of the smallest towns in WA) so there are a lot of things I want to know but can't find out.

Since I'm going to England in the next 3 to 4 months, could you please answer these questions for me:

[1.] I own Tomb Raider 2 and I enjoy the game. I want to buy another Tomb Raider game, but which one should I get? TR1, TR3, or should I wait for TR4?

[2.] Now that V Rally Platinum is in analogue, is it worth checking out?

[3.] Which of these is most similar to Tomb Raider: Shadowman, Syphon Filter, Metal Gear Solid, Silent Hill, Soul Reaver.

[4.] A lot of people talk about losing memory from non-Sony memory cards. Is this true of all memory cards which aren't Sony, or is it just the ones with huge memory? Is it safe to buy a 1MB card which isn't Sony?

[5.] Is it worth buying a steering wheel for my PlayStation? I own Gran Turismo and TOCA 2. And if so, which would be the best model to get?

[6.] I really liked Crash 2. Should I get Crash 3? Or is it more of the same?

Tim McKinnon

[1.] If you're a big Tomb Raider fan, then you should really be getting all of them. If you're not, then TR3 might strike you as a little too samey. TR4 will rock pretty hard.

[2.] If you're looking to get a game at a competitive price, by all means. But V-Rally 2 is a much better game.

[3.] Syphon Filter.

[4.] Third party memory cards are notorious for losing save data and even screwing with the internals of your machine. As a rule, we always advise against using such products, particularly the ones with the electronic switches.

A 1MB card is the same capacity as the standard Sony memory card. I'd check that it's made by a reliable company like Guillemot before buying - lest you run the risk of purchasing a dodgy Taiwanese rip-off.

[5.] A steering wheel will only be worth it if you're a big fan of racing games. We generally prefer the Gamester line of steering wheels. Otherwise, most people get by just fine using Dual Shock controls.

[6.] Crash 3 is a slightly smaller game than Crash 2, but it is infinitely more fun with all the new modes you can play in.

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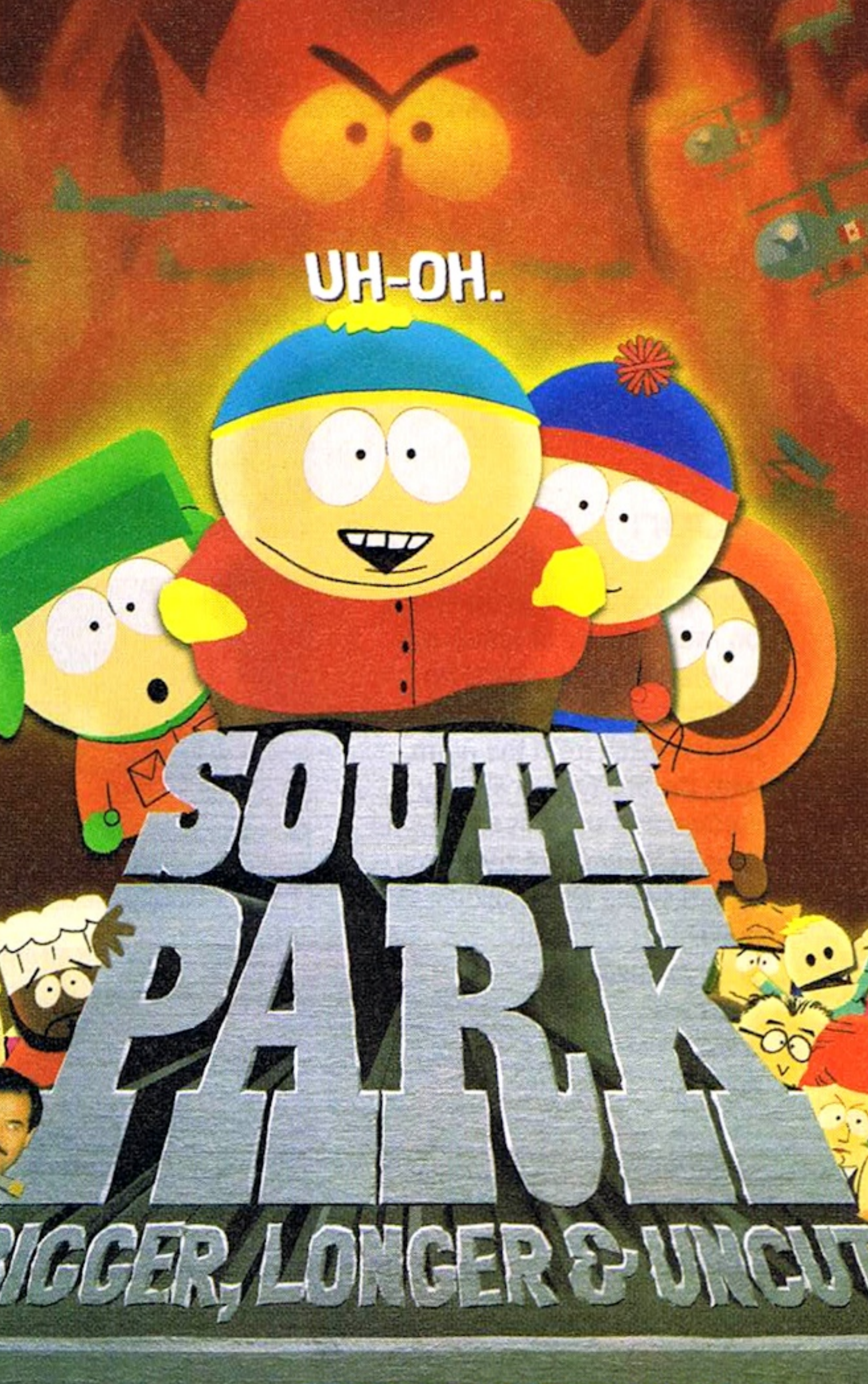
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NZ009

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UH-OH.

SOUTH PARK

BIGGER, LONGER & UNCUT

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HIGH LEVEL COARSE LANGUAGE, SEXUAL REFERENCES



We have got **5 MEGA PACKS**, each containing a copy of the movie, a T-shirt, a poster, a copy of South Park Rally and a copy of South Park Luv Shack for PlayStation. On top of all that, we have an extra 15 packages with everything but the games! So if you haven't seen the movie length South Park feature film, Bigger, Longer and Uncut, then you want to! If, on the other hand, you have seen it, then you will definitely want to experience the pleasure of viewing it again!

All that you have to do to put yourself in the running for these great prizes is **SUBSCRIBE!**



AKKlaim®

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ENTRY: 1. Entry is open to all residents of Australia and New Zealand who subscribe to Australian PlayStation from Issue #9, except employees and the immediate families of Next Gaming Pty Ltd and its agencies associated with the promotion. Only entries completed with these terms and conditions will be eligible. 2. Competition begins at 9am Wednesday, 29th December 1999 and entries close at 6pm Wednesday 2nd February 2000. 3. Winners will be drawn manually and at random at 9am on Friday 4th February 2000 at Next Gaming Pty Ltd, 78 Renwick Street, Redfern, NSW, 2016. 4. The promoter is not responsible for lost or misdirected mail. 5. In determining eligibility the judges' decision will be final and no further correspondence will be entered into. 6. Prizes must be taken as offered and are not redeemable for cash. 7. Total Prize value is \$2,596.50 consisting of 5 winners receiving: 1x South Park Rally game for PlayStation (valued at \$79.95), 1x South Park Luv Shack game for PlayStation (valued at \$79.95), 1x South Park The Movie: Bigger, Longer and Uncut (valued at \$34.95), 1x South Park The Movie soundtrack (valued at \$34.95) and 1x South Park The Movie poster (valued at \$19.95) total value of \$249.75; and of a further 15 winners receiving 1x South Park The Movie: Bigger, Longer and Uncut (valued at \$34.95), 1x South Park The Movie soundtrack (valued at \$34.95) and 1x South Park The Movie poster (valued at \$19.95), total value of \$89.85. 8. Winners will be notified by mail and results published in Issue #11 Australian PlayStation magazine on sale Wednesday 2nd February 2000. 9. The promoter is Next Gaming Pty Ltd of 78 Renwick Street, Redfern NSW 2016. TP pending.



PlayStation Update

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Keep abreast of new developments in the world of the PlayStation

an apology

The cover of the launch issue of Australian PlayStation (May 99) indicated that the free demo disc contained "Ten games including Metal Gear Solid demo". Unfortunately, due to a mix-up in CD production beyond our control, the disk only had six games of which four were playable. The original disk with the ten playable demos was on the cover of Issue 2 but was no doubt cold comfort for our loyal readers.

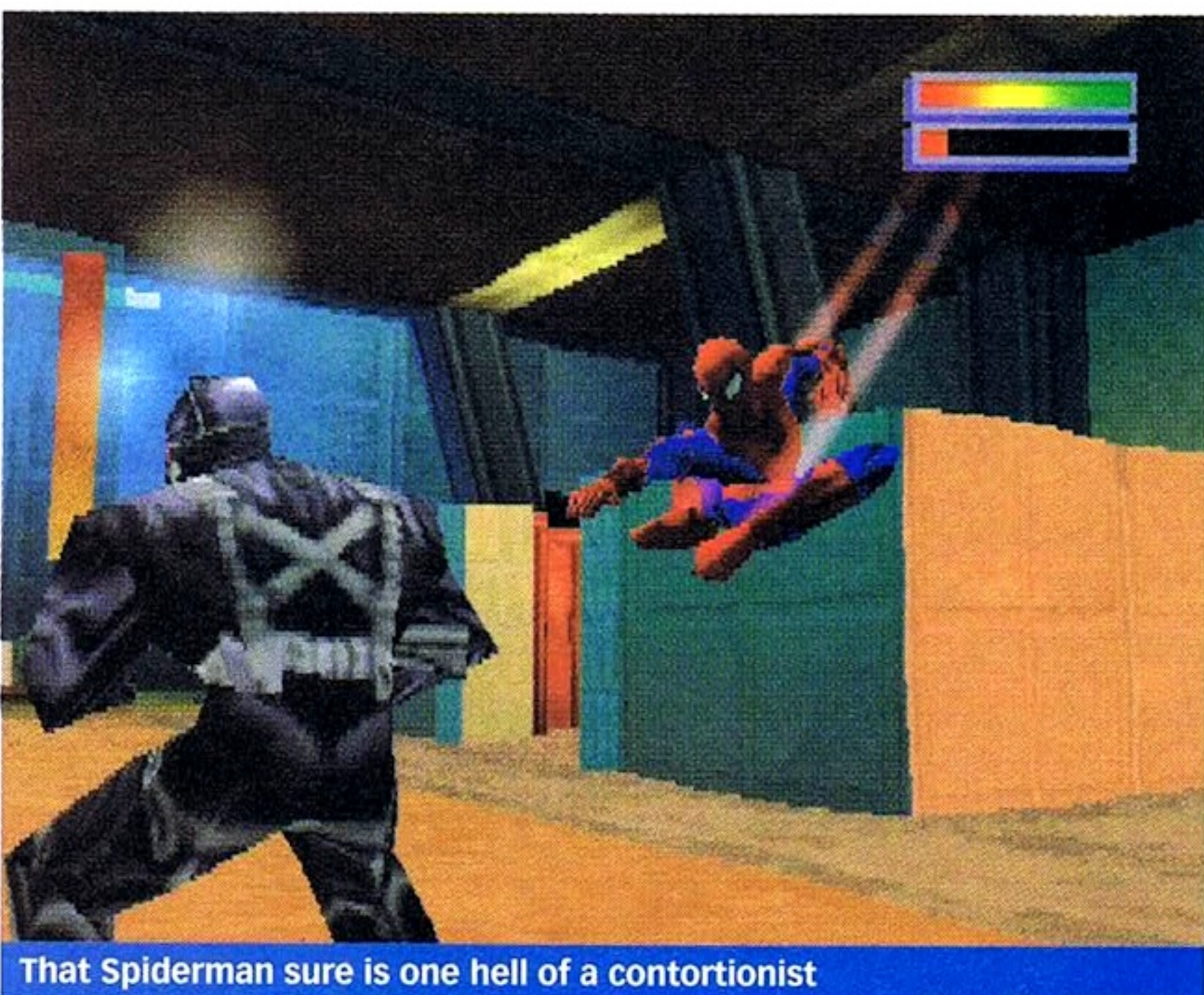
Next Gaming wish to apologise wholeheartedly for any confusion or inconvenience caused as a result of this error and thank all of our readers for sticking with us.

Spiderman caught in his own web...

Our arachnid hero will not be swooping down on us so soon



He's so smart he invented his own web solution



That Spiderman sure is one hell of a contortionist

Sadly, due to time constraints and impossible deadlines, it looks like the eagerly awaited *Spiderman* game for PlayStation will not be coming out as soon as it was once expected. Originally slated for an early 2000 release, *Spidey* has slipped back to sometime after March.

This doesn't surprise us as much as it disappoints. From the look of the preliminary code at last year's E3, this slick title could easily be one of those games whose developers take great pains to make it just perfect.

Borrowing recently popular stealth themes from blockbusters such as *Tenchu: Stealth Assassins* and *Metal Gear Solid*, *Spiderman's* main emphasis will be getting to the bad guys without detection. To do this, players will be required to take to the walls, rooves and ceilings in *Spidey's* home town of Manhattan, just like in the comics.

Spiderman will place the game player in the stripy red and black leotard of Peter Parker, that poor old sod who was endowed with superhuman strength and bizarre powers after being bitten on the hand by a toxic spider

during a delicate experiment on radioactivity at university.

Playing like a typical 3D platformer, *Spiderman* will branch away from the norm with the ability to scale any surface and sling his web as he sees fit, to ensnare the crims and to swing from building to building as if the city were a jungle. We can't wait... but we will just have to.



One cool dude



Prepare to be pounced upon



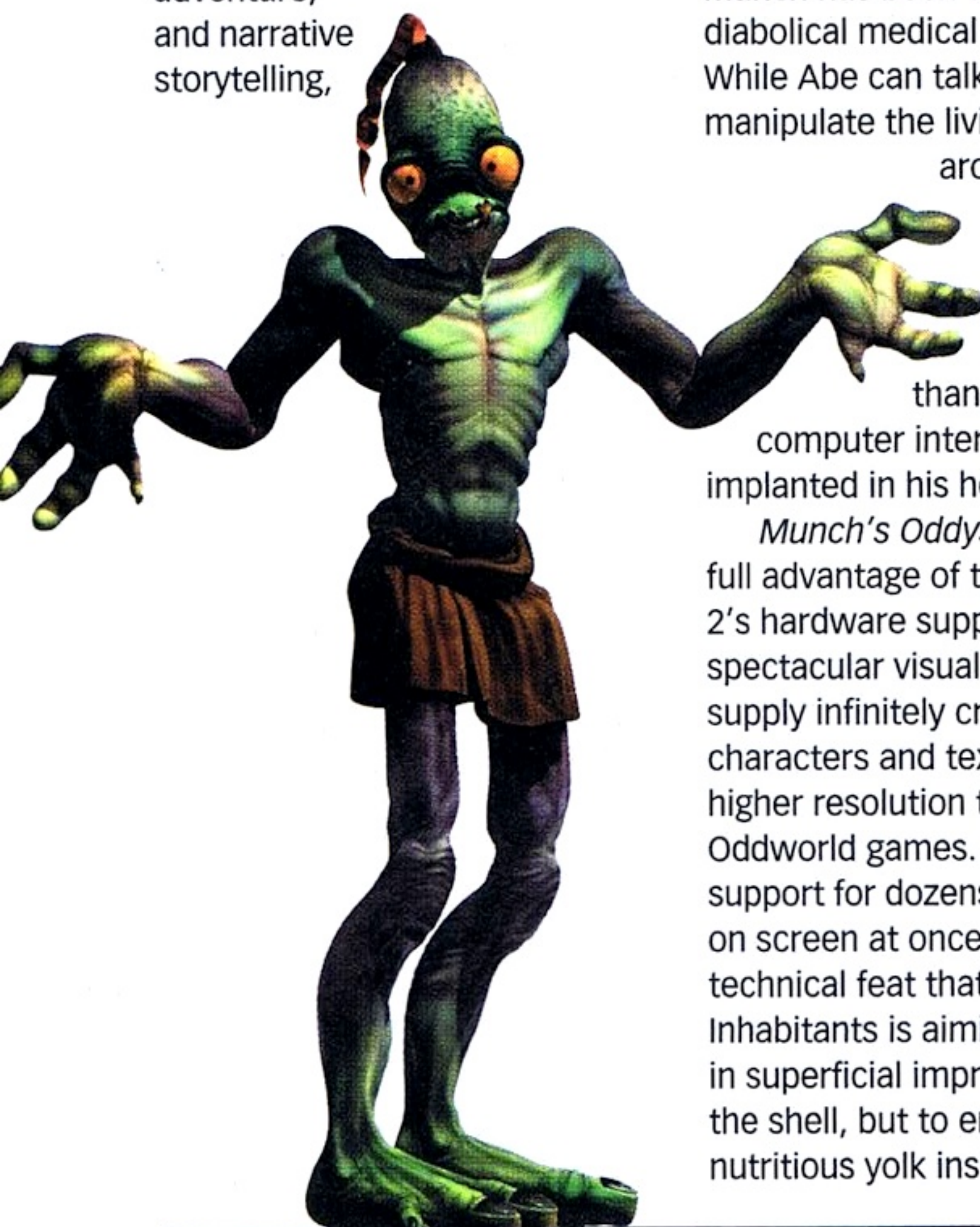
Enemy ensnared!



Munch's Oddysee

Get ready for another strange extravaganza from the land of Odd

Oddworld Inhabitants, the pioneering developers behind Abe's Oddysee and Abe's Exoddus, have let slip more suggestive information on their PlayStation 2 launch title, *Munch's Oddysee*. Ignoring the normal boundaries that define game genres, *Munch's Oddysee* will broach fields of platforming, adventure, and narrative storytelling,



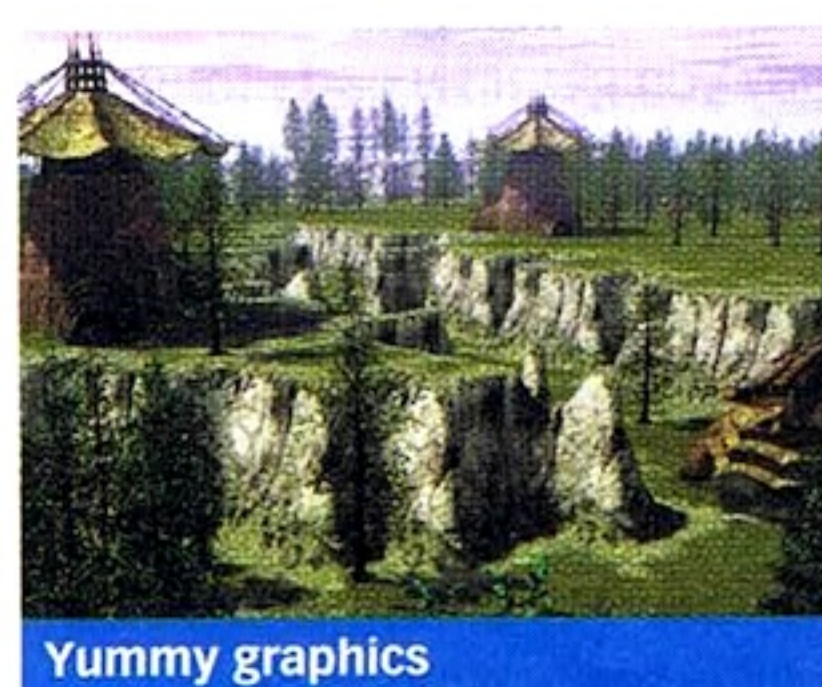
all hewn together with a thread of realistic character interaction driven by the simulated mental states of virtual creatures.

The game will definitely feature the return of our pal Abe, who teams up with a little critter called Munch. The last surviving member of an otherwise extinct species, Munch has been the subject of diabolical medical experiments. While Abe can talk to manipulate the living things around him, Munch has the ability to control machines, thanks to a computer interface jack implanted in his head!

Munch's Oddysee will take full advantage of the PlayStation 2's hardware support of spectacular visual effects and supply infinitely crisper characters and textures in higher resolution than previous Oddworld games. There will be support for dozens of characters on screen at once, but the real technical feat that Oddworld Inhabitants is aiming for is not in superficial improvements to the shell, but to enriching the nutritious yolk inside.



Dear God! Just look at the detail in this screenshot, then try to convince yourself that it is an in-game picture



Yummy graphics



Delicious!



Bad slig. Oppressed mudokon

JUST A FEW WORDS



Sherry McKenna and Lorne Lanning: Inhabitants

A few words from Mr Lorne Lanning, President of Oddworld Inhabitants and all-around video game visionary:

"Munch's Oddysee will be more focused on world simulation and the behaviors of characters and eco-systems to achieve much more 'living' impressions. We are simulating entire life cycles for all the characters in the world, all the communities, and even the landscape. We are truly going for a 'world' simulation approach rather than gauntlet types of puzzles that you saw in our previous games. We are also spending a ton of effort in advanced behavioral, simulation, and social chemistry models. GameSpeak(tm) will also now allow you to move around and manipulate a large number of characters

in order to have them do your bidding and re-shape your landscape. GameSpeak has become more highly evolved and smarter, but simpler to understand and make use of.

We want you to be able to truly feel as though you are on large landscapes that feel alive and are critical to sustaining the rest of the life that depends on them

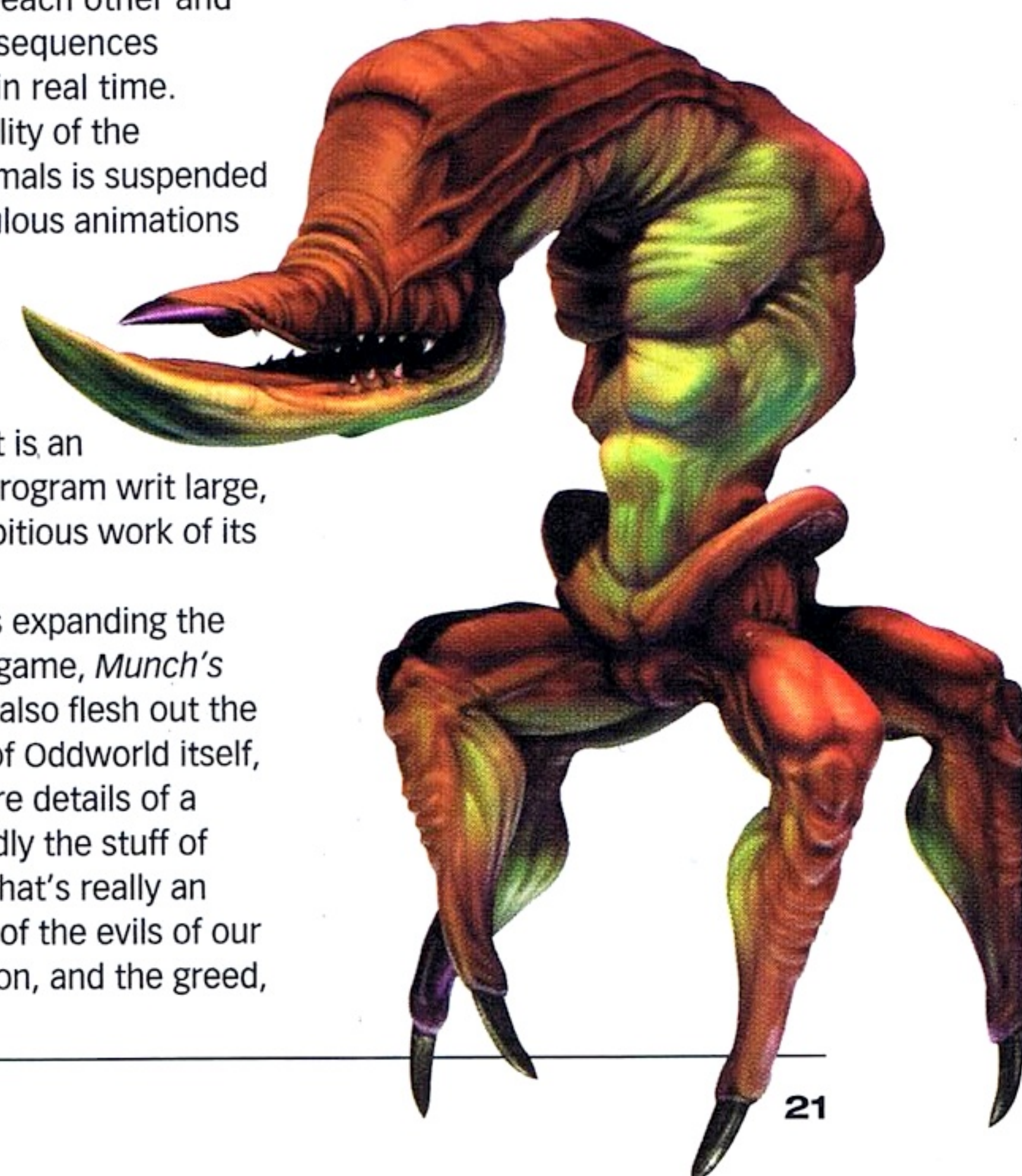
Munch will be a single player game. However, we will also be releasing Oddworld: The Hand of Odd(tm), within the year after Munch's Oddysee is finished. With Hand of Odd, you will get the world chemistry that is available in Munch's Oddysee, but you will be able to play it networked in cooperative or competitive ways. This is something that we are very excited about because it's the first time Oddworld will be networked, and we believe it will be a completely unique experience."

The game world in *Munch's Oddysee* will be, as much as the Emotion Engine will allow, a fully functioning virtual biosphere with all its teeming creatures living out their life cycles and pursuing their goals in a dynamic environment where all creatures can interact with each other and have the consequences wrought out in real time.

The unreality of the contrived animals is suspended by the meticulous animations that they perform in the course of living their virtual lives. It is an artificial life program writ large, the most ambitious work of its kind to date.

As well as expanding the scope of the game, *Munch's Oddysee* will also flesh out the background of Oddworld itself, revealing more details of a planet allegedly the stuff of fantasy, but that's really an overt parody of the evils of our own civilisation, and the greed,

cruelty and extinction it brings about. The game will exploit the DVD format supported by the PlayStation 2, and while playing straight through will take 50 or 60 hours, the replay value presented by a vast interactive game world promises to be nothing short of enormous.



No Fear launch

The best ever mountain biking game takes off!

We were lucky enough to be able to attend the recent launch of Ozisoft's new game *No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking*. Developed by Codemasters, a company with a spotless record of producing fine racers such as *TOCA Touring Cars*, *Micro Machines V3* and *Colin McRae Rally*, the new game lives up to its hype with its smooth graphics and unique gameplay ideas.

21-year-old Sean McCarroll, Australia's number one downhill racing champion, also attended the launch to promote the game in person. He is seeded 11th in the world, he rides a Giant ATX One and he comes from up north in Queensland. Our own Hillous Lesslie, an avid off-road cyclist himself, caught up with Sean McCarroll, Australia's number one downhill racing champion, to teach him a thing or two about riding bikes.

Hillous: How long have you been cycling?

Sean: Since I was six.

Hillous: And when did you get into the downhill scene?

Sean: Only about four years ago

Hillous: What a drag, huh?

Sean: Yeah, it sucks. Going round the world getting paid to do what I'd be doing anyway...

Hillous: What were you doing before this?



Sean: I was into BMX racing, and I like bungee jumping and skydiving too.

Hillous: Freestyle?

Sean: Yeah, ramp and street riding. Lots of races and lots of competitions.

Hillous: Having played the game on PlayStation, what was your initial impression?

Sean: I was surprised at how smoothly it runs. At first I was disappointed with the speed, but you get a lot faster as you get through the game. The energy bar was a good idea too. You can't just pedal flat out all the way or else you get tired and perform badly on the last leg. There's a lot of strategy in coasting down the smooth bits and pedalling only when you need to. I also noticed that it has two guys racing at the same time, but come to think of

it, it wouldn't be so dangerous really as it is only in a game.

Hillous: Thankfully. Is there anything you really like about the game?

Sean: Yeah, the different viewpoints. There are a few, but I really like the one behind the handlebars. You can really feel the speed in that one.

Hillous: How do the real-life perils of downhill racing translate across to the game?

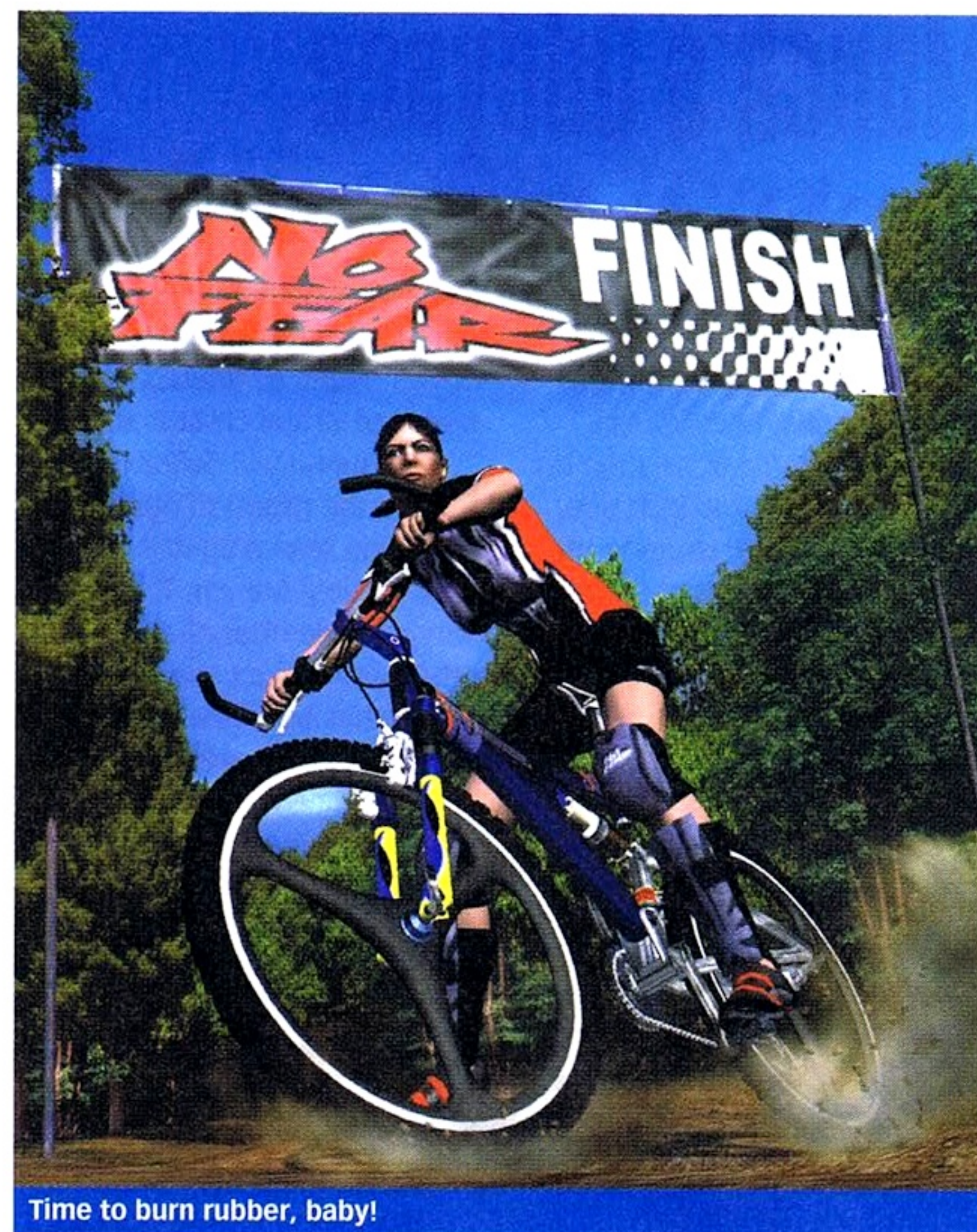
Sean: It's OK. The tracks are a bit smooth, but I think that's just so you can go fast, which is what people want in a racing game. Still, it's much different to other racers. You have to jump over rocks and branches and the things that get in your way, and you can even jump over the ribbon to cut corners if you are going fast enough.

Hillous: In your opinion, is there anything that needs improvement with the game?

Sean: If anything, it'd be the way you get new parts for your bike. You play through and win races, and you are given new parts when you win heats. I would've preferred it if you won money and then had to visit a shop so you could get what you wanted. You'd have to save up for the really good stuff.

Hillous: What do you like the most about *No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking*?

Sean: My bike's in it!



Time to burn rubber, baby!



Hillous teaches Sean a thing or two



To succeed in this ultra-realistic racing simulation you need two things



...keen racing lines...



...and a determination to win

TOCA 3 is now in development

TOCA World Touring Cars worthy of another sequel

Codemasters have begun development on the third installment of the TOCA Touring Cars game series, to be called *TOCA World Touring Cars*. The new game will boast a plethora of improvements over its predecessors, not least of which is a truly international flavour, so far stretching its grip across five continents.

The circuits in the game will be authentically modelled on real life touring car tracks, and so far these include: Laguna Seca (USA), Hockenheim (Germany), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Watkins Glen (America), Vancouver (Canada) and Suzuka (Japan),

and perhaps most important of all, Bathurst! Every PlayStation owner will have the chance to become King of the Mountain!

Perhaps more interesting is a number of improvements being added to the physics engine of the game. The handling and behavior of the vehicles will be determined by a "momentum prediction engine," allegedly the most advanced modeling of a car in motion yet

seen on the PlayStation. And for when the cars crash into fixed objects and each other, a "dynamic deformation polygon damage system" will come into play, twisting and buckling your car in the most realistic fashion possible.

The cars you can trash, in turn, will closely resemble real life Nissans, Peugeots, Renaults, Toyotas, and Volvos.

Worldwide, the TOCA games have sold over two and a half million copies. *TOCA World Touring Cars* will be the final game in the series to appear on the PlayStation, and is scheduled for a mid-2000 release.



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Tomb Raider 4 Campaign Made In Australia

Local video effects producer Animal Logic has got Lara covered

The advertising campaign to be used worldwide in the promotion of *Tomb Raider - The Last Revelation* was made locally by the video production company Animal Logic.

The deal secured between Eidos, Ozisoft and Animal Logic

is the first time ever an ad for a video game to be broadcast in the US and Europe was made in Australia. The 30 second advert will be screened on TV and at the movies in the US, the UK, Germany, France, Italy and Australia.

Astute readers remember the Lucozade TV ads where Lara Croft deemed the glucose enriched beverage as the best solution to her problems. Another Animal Logic production, the Lucozade promotion sets the mold for the upcoming

Tomb Raider - The Last Revelation campaign.

Only now, this local vision of the queen of the video game aristocracy will be seen on TV sets around the world. An Australian video effects outfit, Animal Logic were responsible

for the stunning special effects in the movie *The Matrix*, such as the illusion of time standing still, buildings rippling like pond water and spoons bending under the influence of expanded minds. The talking animals in *Babe* are also their doing.



These shots show the effort that



went into the Lucozade ads



Let's hope the new ads will be



even better!

Snake squeezed into confined space

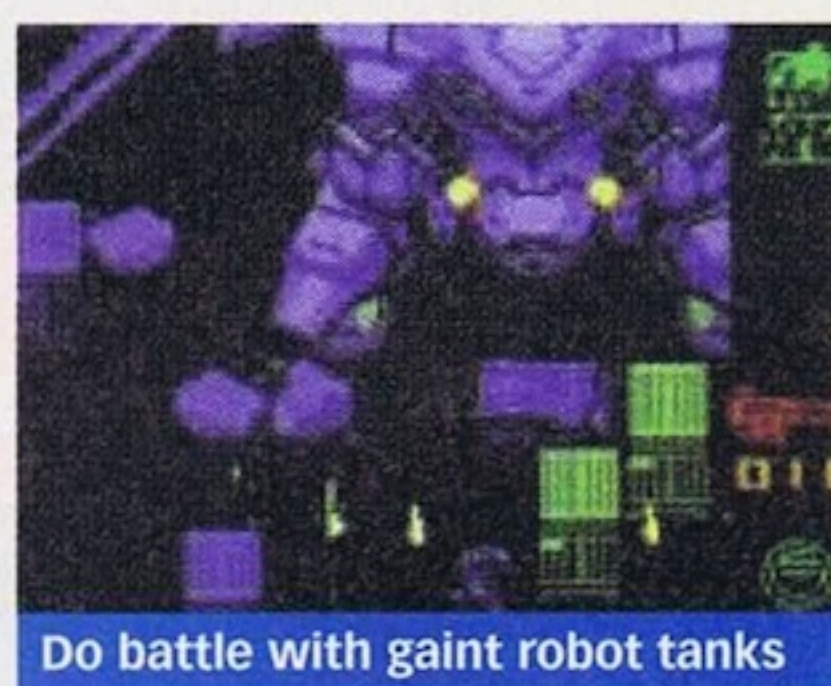
The Metal Gear saga continues - on the Gameboy?

In yet another baffling conversion to the diminutive hand-held game unit, Metal Gear will be appearing on the Gameboy Colour. *Metal Gear: Babel Ghost* will be Snake's first



"Is that a snake in your pocket?"

appearance on the Gameboy, and represents a giant leap backwards in graphics and gameplay, but will doubtless seem perfectly adequate to the legions of GBC fans out there.



Do battle with gaint robot tanks

The near-future action continues with an all-new squad of villains with ridiculous names after Snake's bacon. Their leader is Black Arts Vai, a mysterious figure with a cybernetic left arm.

Filling his lackey quota are Marionette Owl, who attacks under the cover of darkness and is big on puppets, Pyro Bison, a flamethrower-toting fire enthusiast with a body wracked by burns, and Slasher Hawk, an Aboriginal mercenary who attacks with a giant boomerang.



Of course, no Metal Gear escapade would be complete without a military babe of some kind to hang off Snake's arm, and this time around the formula merry-go-round she takes the name of Chris Jenna. Presumably the first ever woman to be let into Delta Force, she's the formulaic keystone that lets the rest of the game write itself.

Fans of the 80s disco feel of the VR training missions won't feel let down either, as their neon blue fakeness can

only be amplified by the tiny screen available. 180 training missions are to be included on the miniscule game card.

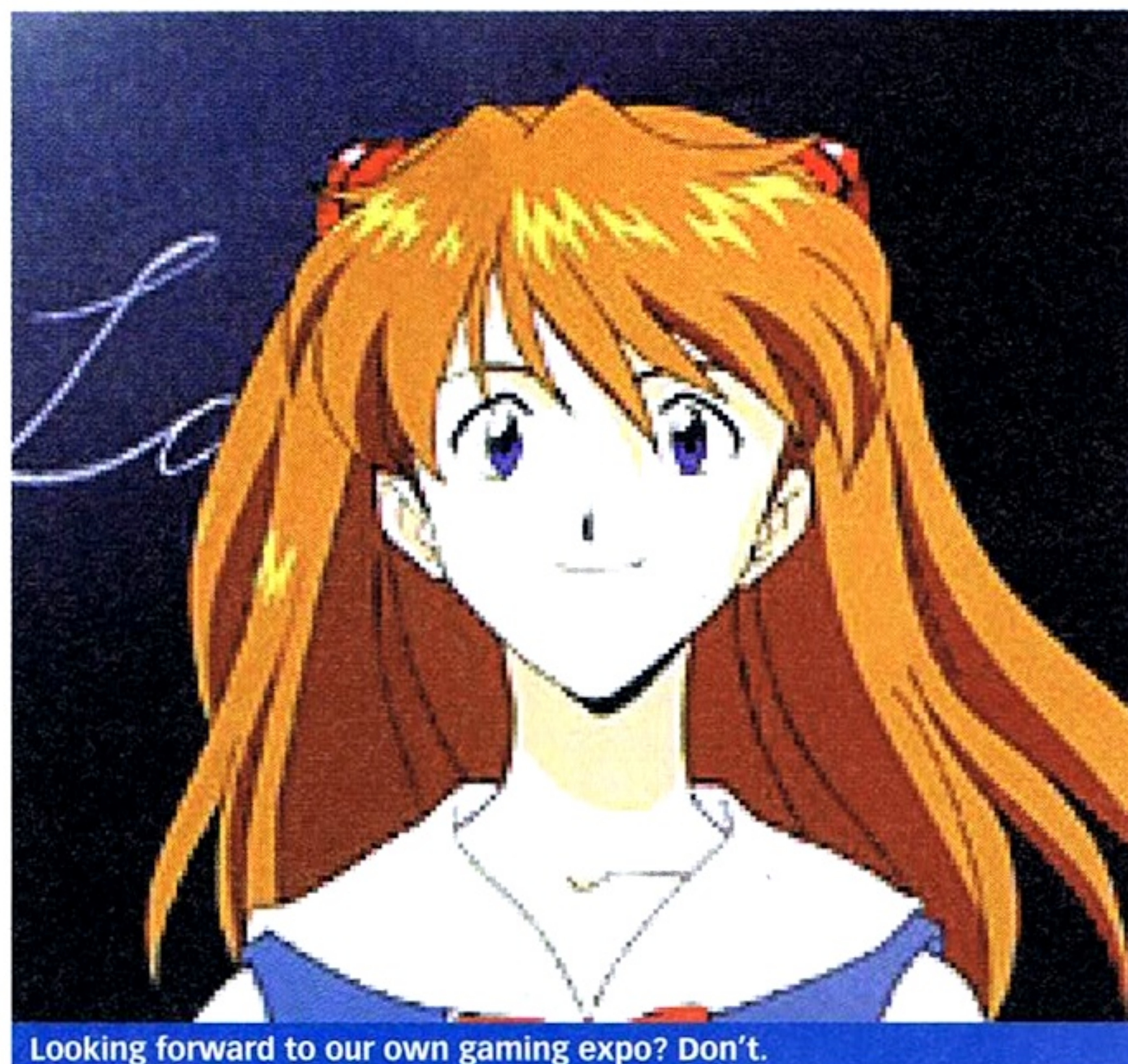
The product evokes feelings of Solid Snake's first adventures on the 8 and 16 bit systems of the late 80s, and may represent a solution for people who want to take their Snake fixation wherever they go. But narrow-minded gamers who cling to notions of "graphics," "sound" and "variety" may view the game as an unprecedented sortie into silliness.

Australian Game Show Delayed

Premiere of Australian Computer Game Expo pushed back to June 2000

Originally planned for December 1999, the Australian Computer Game Expo was to be a mecca for local game developers, distributors and the media, and also open to the general public.

It was to be a chance to get everyone in the industry under the one roof so eager fans could meet in person their gaming gods, but more importantly serve to focus world attention



Looking forward to our own gaming expo? Don't.

on the local industry and show we are just as good as those high falutin' bigshots in the northern hemisphere.

Well, it is definitely not happening. Yet. It's still pencilled in for June 2000, but our rival for the glitz and glamour of "real" game shows like ECTS, E3 and the Tokyo Game Show won't be making its way to Homebush stadium for some time yet.



Toy Story 2

The toys are back in town



Toy Story 2 will star Buzz Lightyear in huge, free-roaming environments

In conjunction with the release of the sequel to the first ever completely computer generated movie, Activision will bring out a game for the PlayStation based on the film. *Toy Story 2* will pit you, Buzz Lightyear, against a legion of evil toys on your quest to free your best friend Woody from an evil toy collector.

The game follows the plot of the film for the most part, but will allow for various sub-quests and diversions in the universe spun by the films. As Buzz you can jump, glide and you can



even fire your laser cannons, which unlike in the movies, work in this game.

The environments you rove around in are truly huge, with perspective and scale distorted by having a toy's-eye view.

A title aimed at younger gamers, the puzzle work largely revolves around collecting identical items scattered through a map and figuring out exactly which platforms need to be jumped on to reach your targets. That said, the game is crisp and colourful, and is bound to please countless munchkins on its release.

Comic brings Kain back

Soul Reaver lives on...



Raziel's mood will be just perfect

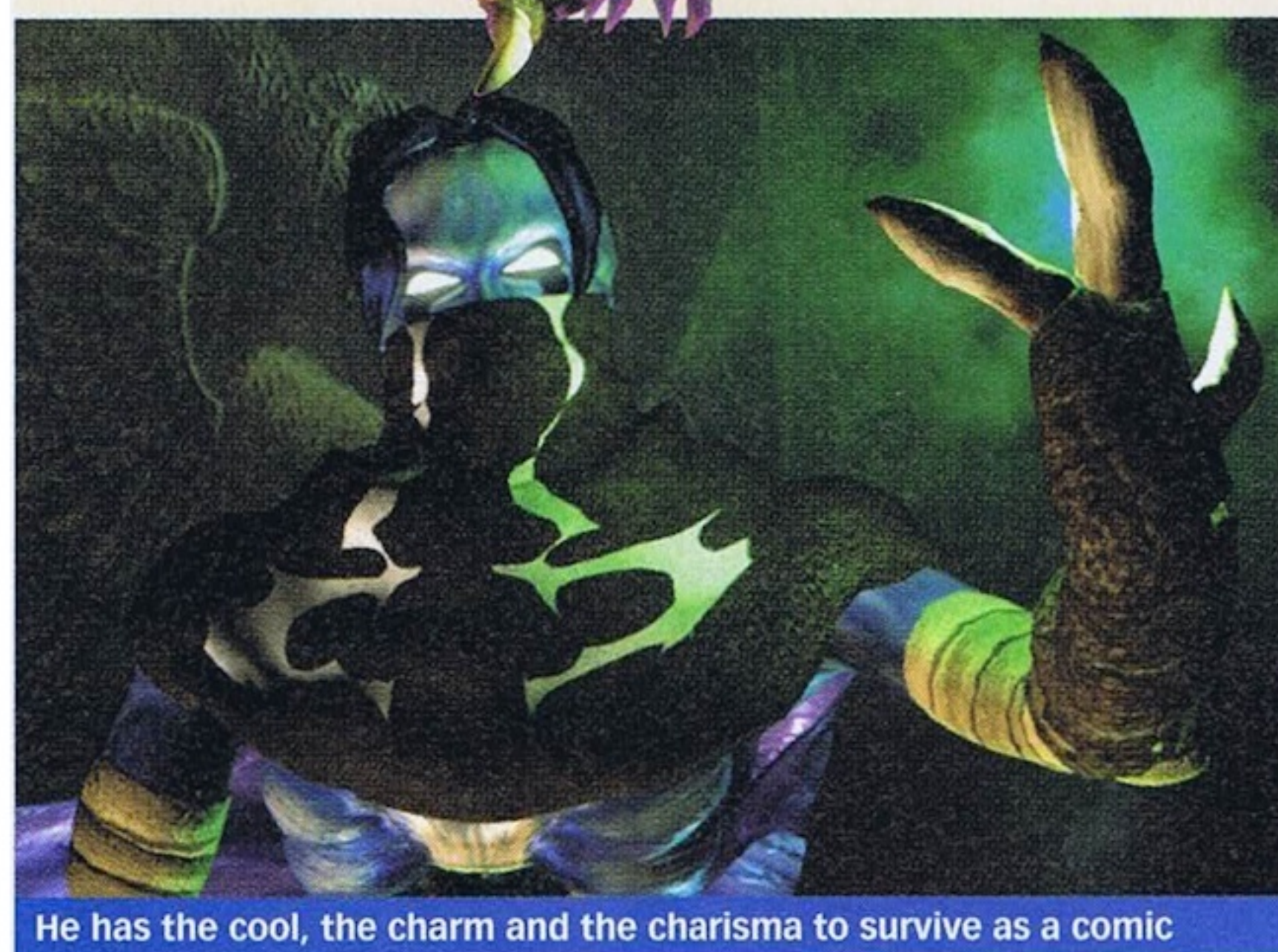


for reproduction in comic form

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver is to become a hot new comic book under a deal forged between Eidos and Top Cow Comics. The new book will chronicle the origins of Raziel, his fall from power at Kain's side and his thousand year long quest for his revenge.

The most interesting revelations for fans of the game, however, will lie in what comes next, as Raziel's adventures after the games enigmatic conclusion will follow.

Eager to discover what becomes of the sole survivor of his own unholy rampage? Find out at a comic shop near you.



He has the cool, the charm and the charisma to survive as a comic

Mini News



Resident Evil 3: Nemesis

Biohazard hits Tokyo!

No, we're not talking about the recent unfortunate nuclear fracas, but Capcom's latest Survival Horror experience, Biohazard 3: Last Escape. At Takadanobaba station along the city's circle line, a multi-panel billboard display stretched alongside the train platforms.

Meanwhile in Akihabara, virtually every game shop sported artwork of some kind. T-Zone, a store renowned for import hardware and software amongst its multi-level electronics shopping haven, featured the game prominently.

The display included artwork panels and merchandising such as door keys and a range of syringe key chains, each containing a different coloured serum.

Other items of note available were painted figures of the cast and Guardian Forces of Final Fantasy VIII and even Squall's leather outfit, complete with furry collar! Perfect for the upcoming winter season, a gamer was spotted wearing the getup at the Tokyo Game Show last month. Unfortunately, a 1/1 scale Gunblade replica was nowhere to be found.

Just across the road, another store showcased the Metal Gear Solid collection, which included Super Deformed character pins, extravagantly packaged trading cards and action figures. Just released at the time of writing was The Art of Metal Gear Solid featuring the work of Yoji Shinkawa. It can be yours for around sixty dollars.

Nomad Soul goes walkabout

Omikron delayed yet again as PlayStation's light fades...



Not so fast: Omikron

Published by Eidos and developed by a team of very cosmic Gauls called Quantic Dream, *Omikron: The Nomad Soul* has suffered numerous setbacks since it was announced in early '99. While it now looks like the game could be eventually developed for the PlayStation 2 and Dreamcast, it also seems that development for the existing PlayStation could be abandoned.

The Nomad Soul borrows from the proud tradition of very strange science fiction from France by putting you in the shoes of an individual who can take over the bodies of other people and assume their roles.

Aside from emulating various bodily functions as performed by the game characters, the risqué content of *The Nomad Soul* is made even more provocative by the digitised presence of David Bowie.

Eidos will be taking a wait-and-see approach and judge the sales from the PC version before deciding which way to turn with their development cycle. Until then, this huge RPG adventure will remain in a parallel universe.



Textures too good...



Not for the current PlayStation

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\$79⁹⁵ Gran Turismo 2 PSX (G).

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Step into the arena, choose your weapon and stake your life in pursuit of the Unreal Grand Master title. Wield the Impact hammer and reduce your opponents to pulp, or pulverise them with the rocket-powered Redeemer.



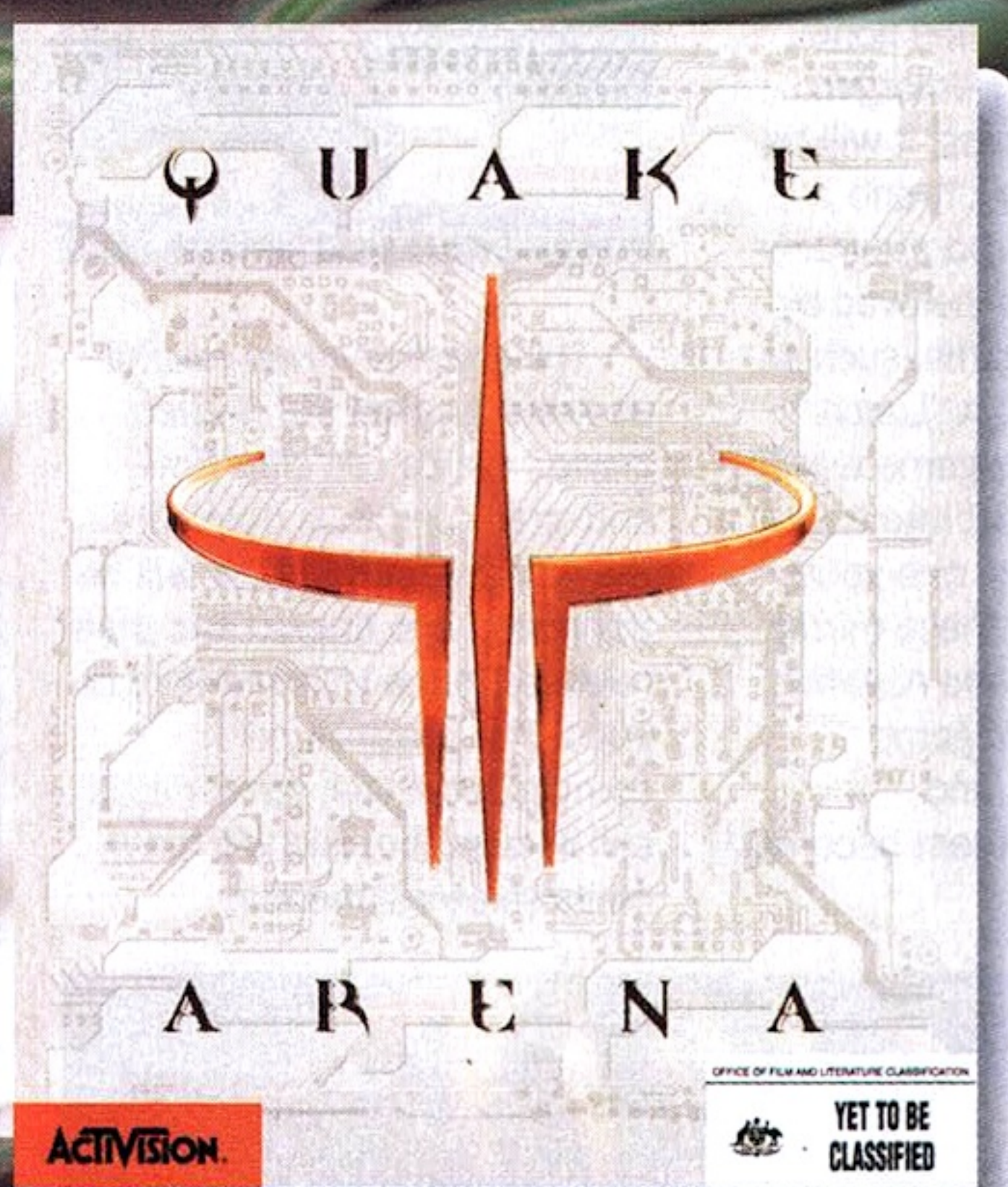
\$89⁹⁵ Sonic Adventures (G).

Welcome Sonic the hedgehog and his five unique friends to the mind-blowing world of 3D. Players can adopt the role of Sonic or one of his friends in an action-packed mission to prevent the diabolical Doctor Eggman and his evil henchmen from world domination.

\$89⁹⁵

Quake III Arena (M15).

Feed on the raw thrill of single or multi-player massacres. Sharpen your skills against brutal warriors and then rack up death-match kills via the internet.



\$99⁹⁵

Donkey Kong 64 N64 (G).

Join Donkey Kong, Diddy Kong and three new charismatic characters as they traverse eight mind-boggling worlds to overthrow King K.Rool and his wicked army of Kremings.

Harvey Norman
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HN20943

Sony Execs talking tough

PlayStation 3 may or may not be second coming of Christ

At recent industry functions across Japan and around the world, executives at Sony headquarters have been speaking of the glorious future that the PlayStations of tomorrow will create.

Shinichi Okamoto, senior VP of R&D at SCE, in an address to the Microcomputer System and Tool Fair in Tokyo, claimed that the PlayStation 3, when it rears its head in almost a decades time will be 1000 times as powerful as the PlayStation 2.

In another address, it's been claimed that when the PlayStation 2 is released in Japan in March, it will have 250 games available for it. While these statements may have been based on fact, like all hype



There must be many ploygons in those boobs, or perhaps bezier curves

surrounding a new game system's launch, they may have been stretching the truth just a

little. For instance, it's possible that they were including games for the PlayStation 1 in that

figure, since technically they will run on the new machine.

Also, there are certain engineering concerns raised by the current vision for the PlayStation 3. There is the matter of current silicon technology approaching certain physical limits as to how many transistors can realistically fit onto a single chip, the amount of cooling it would need to stop it melting into the floor, and of course the price.

There is no cause for alarm, by all accounts the PlayStation 2 will basically kick arse. It is just a matter of whether or not you believe the hype.

Mini News



PlayStation 2



Sony of America are expecting to reap a billion dollar windfall over the Christmas season, thanks to a price slash that has cut the cost of a PlayStation in the US to a mere 99 bucks.

The move, which sold a million PlayStations in the US in the past two months, combined with their Platinum range, the "Greatest Hits Collection," which sells classic games for as little as US\$20 a throw, means Sony are cleaning up even in the wake of the brilliantly executed US launch of the Sega Dreamcast, beating the new super console both in terms of overall sales and units sold.

The Dreamcast was released at a price point of US\$200 on September 9, and seemed unstoppable until Sony showed its hand.

While loss leading, the practice of selling your product below cost, may seem like a risky move, Sony know that another million consoles sold means another million households full of kids screaming for the latest games, and this is where the real money is made.

Still, this could be the last killer Christmas for Sony for some time. When the PlayStation 2 comes out for Christmas 2000, it will cost more, offer baffling options and perhaps even intimidate a public unwilling to embrace the future. As long as selling consoles means more of the same, Sony are in the money.

The Strangest Freebie...

Automatic Bubble Making Machine



To think that we used it until we ran out of detergent

Once again, we have thrown down the gauntlet, challenging the retailers of manufactured goods across the nation to provide us with the most unusual of their wares. In return, we offer a write-up on their product, under the pretence of reporting the most bizarre item to come our way in the never ending maelstrom of media cross-promotion.

This time we received; A bubble machine. Children the world over take delight every day in suspending a thin film of detergent in a hand-held ring and blowing through it, making glistening, enchanted bubbles of goodness. But until now, the thought of mass-producing bubbles with some kind of relentless, automatic device was pure fantasy. Until now.

Bubbles Beyond Bubbles from Moose Enterprise, a

Melbourne based toy manufacturer, is a battery driven machine that you place firmly on a flat surface. Once loaded with fluid, its fan can produce a swarm of dozens of bubbles in mere seconds.

When we experimented with the Armageddon-like power of the *Bubbles Beyond Bubbles*, we were both amazed and horrified. No one man should have the power to generate so many bubbles in so short a time. Moral implications aside, there is the looming threat this awesome device could pose to global security in this post cold war period of bubble proliferation. While we cannot condone its use, we cannot stop you. For more information on the Final Bubble Solution, cast your eyes to

<http://www.moosetoys.com>. May God have mercy on us all.

Double Crossed!

Square's sequel to Chrono Trigger

The cult RPG from Squaresoft, Chrono Trigger, is getting a glossy sequel for PlayStation, and as its Japanese release has come and gone, more details have emerged. Called *Chrono Cross*, it will be set 20 years after Chrono Trigger, and incorporate many of the characters beloved by fans of the first game, such as the genius scientist "Lucca."

Only now, the game world they inhabit is split into two parallel universes, one good, the other evil. In these mirror worlds, positive and negative versions of all the game characters exist, and interacting with them becomes doubly complex.



The guy with blue hair returns

The quest revolves around an artifact called the "frozen flame," which can alter time and space and thus dominate the world. *Chrono Cross* will be translated into English and then released in the US sometime in 2000. The possibility of it coming out in PAL territories is still in question, and will hinge on its sales in America.



The cutest polygonal blonde I ever saw!



The Airpad

By Joytech

The Airpad controller does not have any thumbsticks or rumbling mechanism, but it makes up for this by incorporating IMEM's electro-magnetic gravity sensor device into its round chassis. By merely tilting the controller left or right, forward or back, a directional input message is sent to the PlayStation telling it to steer.

The Airpad caters for all Dual Shock and NegCon compatible games as well as all existing games which work only with the original D-pad. There are several settings for sensitivity, analogue or digital tilt and NegCon/Dual Shock compatibility. Overall we found that it worked alright with every game.

The shape is a curious one, but it makes sense. Even after hours of constant play, the pad refused to irk our tired hands. It also even has a number of separately available plastic cover "skins" which can be attached to the controller to make it look fancier.

The only gripes we have with this pad are to do with the direction pad itself and the shoulder buttons. The D-pad is loose and badly inbuilt, so you will have difficulty pressing any intended direction without pressing another as well. The shoulder buttons are loose, but they represent no such problems as they only perform a single function each.

All up, it is a good controller. Nobody will be buying it for its D-pad - the tilt function is its trump card, so the D-pad is useless by comparison anyway. If you've never played a racing game with only one hand, perhaps you should try it out.

FEEL: ★★★★★

DESIGN: ★★★

CONSTRUCTION: ★★★



Shock 2 Racing Wheel

By Guillemot

The Shock 2 Racing Wheel from Guillemot is superb, as far as PlayStation wheels go. It has a broad, flat base and it comes with a set of bolts to attach it to a desk or table. It even sports Ferrari's horse emblem smack bang in the middle of the wheel, which may give gamers the subliminal message that they are driving something very expensive.

The wheel itself has been fattened and rounded at either side, so that your hands sit comfortably and you can really grip it. Its craftsmanship is excellent, with no discrepancies to be found in its manufacture whatsoever.

There are no sensitivity adjustments, but this is fine due to the satisfactory initial settings. The Shock 2 Racing Wheel is easy enough to turn, but not so easy that it destroys the realism. It feels good and solid in the hands.

Instead of four buttons, there is simply another direction pad near your right thumb. Instead of the □, ○, △ and × buttons. The foot pedals also double as the × and □, so the only thing you can't do using this wheel is press ○ and △ simultaneously. Thankfully, not that many racing games require you to perform this feat.

The foot pedals are alright, but a little slippery. The spring in them is not very strong, meaning that you have to actually lift your foot to ease up on the pedal. The rubber pads on them grip smooth surfaces well, but the pedals can get away from you on carpet. The Shock 2 Racing Wheel is Negcon compatible as well.

FEEL: ★★★★★

DESIGN: ★★★★★

CONSTRUCTION: ★★★★★

DIGITAL VERSATILE DISC

Looking forward to the PlayStation 2? Here's a taste of what it can do

FUTURESPORT

This rip off of Rollerball is so bad, it's good. Dean Cain plays a champion of *Futuresport*, a combination of skateboarding, hockey and sports film clichés. Vanessa Williams portrays his comely love/hostage interest, and Wesley Snipes is a *Futuresport* guru with an unbelievable Jamaican accent.

The forward thinking superpowers of the future decide to avert a war by staging a futuresport match to decide the fate of the breakaway Hawaiian islands. In a world where a person's worth can be measured by an aggregated

fame index, our hero must both keep it real, and try not to laugh at the ludicrous Australian accents, either. First class sci-fi tosh. The DVD features are a little sparse, but include web access and deleted scenes. Wow.

GHOSTBUSTERS SPECIAL EDITION, & GHOSTBUSTERS 2

Ghostbusters is one of the best comedy films of the eighties, and possibly of all time. Directed by Ivan Reitman (a genius), it depicts post-grad

dropouts played by Bill Murray, Harold Ramis and Dan Aykroyd as they go into business catching ghosts.

The quirky dialogue and splattering slapstick stands by itself, but this disc also includes deleted scenes, interviews, a commentary voice-over, photo gallery, storyboards, the theatrical trailer, and you can even watch the film with multiple camera angles.

Relive such immortal lines as "Ray, when somebody asks you if you're a god, you - say - YES!" *Ghostbusters II* was more of the same, and while the disc doesn't have as many features, it is still in

widescreen with surround sound, and you watch it with Icelandic subtitles if you really feel the need to do so.

8mm

Nicolas Cage expands his repertoire in this psychological thriller by not just playing a bug eyed freak, but a brooding bug eyed freak. The visuals in *8mm* are rather exquisite, and displayed in an extra-widescreen mode of vision.

Even if your TV supports a 9:16 aspect ratio, you'll find black bars within the black bars and feel like you are watching this dark tale through a 2.35:1 letterbox. Mr Cage is a private eye hired to check the authenticity of a snuff film, plunging him into the clutches of the Arabic porno mob.

Balk at the brazen audacity of the rich, marvel at one man's descent into obsession and violence, and confirm your suspicions that S&M serial killers not only wax lyrical, but also listen to Aphex Twin. DVD functionality

supports a filmography and a featurette.

THE MATRIX

Keanu Reeves techno-thrillers have come a long way since Chain Reaction. The DVD

for *The Matrix* is packed with more than the usual spread of theatrical trailers and filmographies. Vast bodies of out-takes are spread throughout the disc in the form of a

"Follow the white rabbit" game. Hitting the right button when a white rabbit appears on the screen will take you to bloopers of Mr Reeves falling flat on his face in gravel!

A similar game involving a red capsule reveals the secrets behind the special effects, such as how they filmed the "bullet time" shots, or their

expert kung fu training at the hands of grand master Wu Peng. Separate running commentaries are provided by both by the producers and the composer. This DVD just oozes class.

PSYCHO

The original and best. There was a full colour remake of this black and white classic released in '98, but it came off as a pale imitation of the Hitchcock classic.

The potential of the DVD format may at first seem squandered by this film, as it was recorded in mono, and the deceased director is unavailable for comment, but *Psycho* is such a masterpiece it can stand on its own. Special features on the disc are limited, but it does

include the original trailer, and a new trailer made last year that's scarier than the film itself.

Psycho is an old movie, but fans of Hitchcock, or those inspired by the references made to it in popular culture should consider this an absolute must-see.

BABYLON 5 TAPES

This is the end of the line for the most acclaimed sci-fi TV series to hit our screens in the last decade. The creators of this show planned the entire series in advance, allowing for unprecedented character development, plot twists, and emotional attachment to the characters themselves. These three tapes chronicle the fall of the Centauri Republic, the main characters last days on the space station *Babylon 5*, and the dawn of the new Galactic Alliance, which was their goal since the very beginning.

BABYLON 5 - A CALL TO ARMS

The fourth and final *Babylon 5* movie, this speaks of the further adventures of the space stations crew, and leads into the new spin-off series *Crusade*. All the loose ends exposed by the five year run of the cult TV series have been wrapped up- or have they? Though the evil Shadows have left the galaxy, their malevolent servants, the Draak remain. With a planet killing device at their disposal, they seem unstoppable, unless of course a remote enclave of 23rd century medievalists who call themselves "Techno Mages" can warn the four humanoids most capable of saving the Earth in time. For those who have been following *Crusade* on TV and want to know what happened first, or fans of the original series who want to know what happened next, *A Call To Arms* could be a useful history lesson.

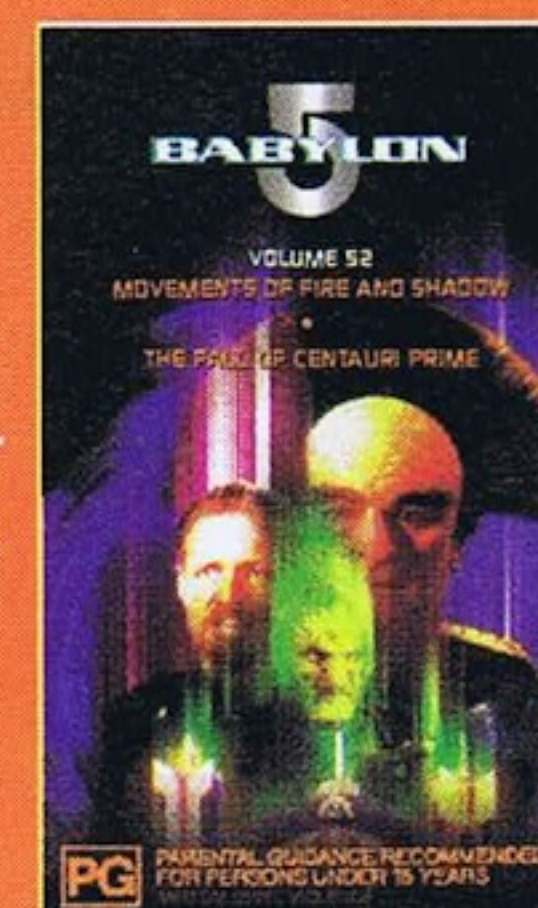
COMPETITION

WIN YOUR OWN BABYLON 5 TAPES!

These are the last *Babylon 5* tapes that will be available until mid-2000. Fear not, there is a simple method for minimising your *Babylon 5* withdrawal symptoms until then. We have got 10 packs of the four reviewed tapes to give away to our readers, and all you have to do to win is answer a simple question-

WHAT ARE THE NAMES OF THE TWO ANCIENT RACES WHO STARTED THE SHADOW WAR?

Write your answer, together with your name and address clearly on the back of an envelope, and send it to
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PALM V

DIGITAL ORGANISER

Pioneered by the ill-fated Apple Newton, the market for handheld digital assistants has blossomed in the 90s. By writing on the tiny LCD screen with a stylus, handwriting can be recognised and interpreted in increasingly elaborate software to aid both business and pleasure in the furthest reaches of human endeavour. Palm Computing produce one of the better lines of products in this field, the Palm Pilot being the vanguard of their ever-improving palmtops.

The most recent and the most advanced of this series is the *Palm V*. The memory of the *Palm V* can hold personal appointments for years in advance, hundreds of contact details, and it can even run powerful applications like Sybase databases.

What's more, the *Palm V* acts not as some mere organising gadget of ineffectual whimsy, but as a physical extension of a desktop PC.

By use of specialised Pilot software, data can be passed to and from the portable unit and your primary computer, allowing the user to extend their office automation into the field. The *Palm V* has an add-on modem unit that can plug into most any digital mobile phone, allowing you to remotely read and send email, or back up data to your PC.

Increasingly stocked by stationary suppliers and normal department stores, organisers like the *Palm V* are increasingly becoming not just the tools of nerds and specialists, but part of the brave new world that is our daily life.

This is just one example of where modern technology is beginning to take us in this advantageous era of ours. In the palm of your hand, the world can be manipulated on many different levels.

To a yuppie, this is a new toy to be appreciated for a week. To a regular Joe, this nifty little electronic tool could be used in ways unheard of. Don't expect to get it cheap, though.



COMPETITIONS

All of the January competitions will close on the 18th January, 2000.

READY 2 RUMBLE ULTIMATE BOXING COMP

Wanna fight? C'mon! You lookin at me?

Ready 2 Rumble is the finest, and funnest, boxing game we have yet seen on the mighty PlayStation, packed with character and undeniable style.

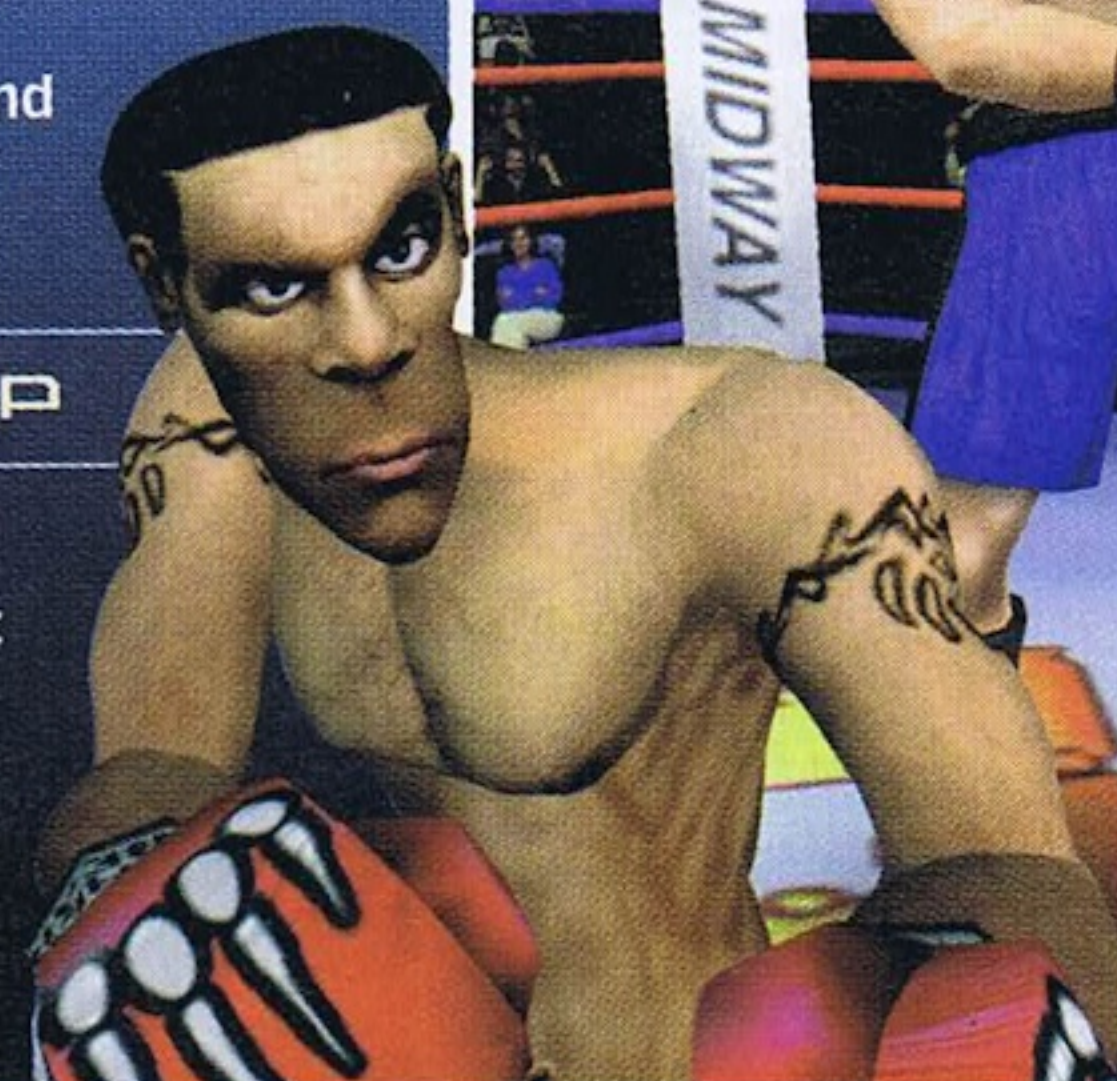
Thanks to all of the goodly folk at Playcorp, we have got five copies of this bruising boxer to give away to those who can answer this simple question:

CAN YOU NAME SEVEN WORDS WHICH RHYME WITH RUMBLE?

Put your name, address and answer on an envelope and send it to:

RUMBLE COMP

PlayStation Magazine
Level 6, 418a Elizabeth St
Surry Hills NSW 2010



NO FEAR DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING COMP

Get dirty with the best fun you can have on two wheels!



No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking has been wowing the crowds as one of the most long-awaited sports titles. After wading through the lists of basketball games and hockey games, No Fear Mountain Biking is the perfect game for unwinding, and it's even more satisfying since it's the only good push-pedal biking game around.

With thanks to OziSoft, we've got five copies of No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking to give away. On top of that, one lucky winner will come away with a copy of the game AND a Giant Team Racing

jersey, signed by the biking superstar himself, Sean McCarroll.

For a chance to win these prizes, answer the following question: WHAT COLOUR IS HILLOUS' GIANT WARP DS-2 BICYCLE?

Put your name, address and answer on an envelope and send it to:

NO FEAR COMP

PlayStation Magazine
Level 6, 418a Elizabeth St
Surry Hills NSW 2010

MUSIC 2000 FUNKY MUSIC COMP

Win yourself a copy of Music 2000!



For every lover of music, there is the budding musician. Whether it's from playing an instrument during our school years or just freestyling a few tunes on a budget synthesiser, everyone wants to produce their own masterpiece.

Enter Music 2000, the sequel to Codemasters' acclaimed Music. It offers more samples and options for you to play with, allowing you to produce the most outrageous breakbeats you can imagine.

Thanks to the lovely folks at OziSoft, we have got 5 copies of Music 2000 to give away as prizes.

For a chance to win these prizes, answer the following question:

WHAT NAME WOULD YOU CALL YOURSELF AS A DJ?

Put your name, address and answer on an envelope and send it to:

FUNKY MUSIC COMP

PlayStation Magazine
Level 6, 418a Elizabeth St
Surry Hills NSW 2010

TONY HAWK COMP WINNERS: DENAE FIEZ (NSW); JAMES AUSTIN (ACT); CODY DAL NEVO (NSW); GREG SMIT (VIC); COURTNEY LUKE (NZ); STEPHEN WILLIAMS (NZ)
STRAP-ON COMP WINNERS: JOSH OWENS (QLD); MATT WATTS (VIC); JAMES MARRON (NSW); SCOTT LEAMAN (QLD); BEN COATES (WA); ALEX SCHMITZ (SA)
IMPOSSIBLE COMP: B GILL (TAS); M HAYES (VIC); D BRETT (NSW); V ARKEVELD (WA); C JANSKY (SA); J PARKER (VIC); S TYSON (VIC); R PRASAD (FIJI); S GRAHAM (NZ); H MCBRIDE (NZ)
GTA2 PACK COMP WINNERS: NATHAN WYATT (SA); HUGH BURGER (VIC); WENDY ALLMIN (QLD); LISA GIENG (NSW); JASON THOMPSON (NT); CORY BURN (NZ)
HUNGRY HUNGRY DINOS COMP WINNERS: SCOTT BRENNAN (VIC); ELIZABETH THOMPSON (NSW); DAN MARTIN (WA); JOSH HOBBS (QLD); DEBBIE REID (NSW)
BIG BEATS COMP WINNERS: ADAM DEANE (TAS); JOEL BUTAO (NSW); AMANDA MOORE (NSW)

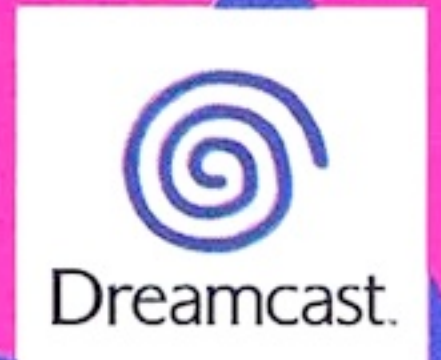
CHEF TAKES ON THE ROLE OF GAME SHOW HOST IN A WILD
MULTIPLAYER MATCH FEATURING ALL YOUR FAVORITE SOUTH PARK
CHARACTERS! COMPETE WITH YOUR FRIENDS IN DOZENS OF
MINI-GAMES THAT TEST YOUR SOUTH PARK GAMING SKILLS!



SOUTH PARK CHEF'S LUV SHACK™



Acclaim



AVAILABLE DECEMBER 1999

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the BEST OF 1999 AWARDS

The results are in. They have been collated. The dedicated readers of this magazine have taken the time to tell us what they think of the games of '99, and we have taken time to listen. The pages that follow reveal an exhaustive analysis of the games that count. The figures laid bare for all: an aggregation of the public's mind.



Gran Turismo



Crash Bandicoot: Warped



Final Fantasy Platinum



Metal Gear Solid



Metal Gear Solid

THE BEST MUSIC

Gran Turismo	25%
Bust A Groove	21%
WipEout 2097	19%
Rollcage	18%
Tony Hawk Skateboarding	5%
MediEvil	4%
Psybadek	3%
Other	5%

Here we have three racers in the top four, further evidence of the crucial role music has in creating tension and suspense in a driving game. Gran Turismo was the people's choice, edging out Bust A Groove and the unrealistic future racers in favour of real cars that real people can covet.

THE BEST GRAPHICS

Crash Bandicoot: Warped	26%
Metal Gear Solid	23%
Final Fantasy VII Platinum	16%
V Rally 2	15%
Ridge Racer Type 4	5%
Gran Turismo	3%
Tony Hawk Skateboarding	4%
Spyro The Dragon	2%
Other	6%

No big surprises here. The cartoon-like characters and settings of Crash 3 were crisp, colourful and nothing short of lavish. An honourable second mention to Metal Gear Solid, which has done a great service to the community in making espionage sexy again.

THE BEST SPECIAL EFFECTS

Final Fantasy VII Platinum	52%
Omega Boost	20%
MediEvil	16%
Metal Gear Solid	2%
Tony Hawk Skateboarding	2%
Other	8%

The Summon Sequences, such as those for Odin, Knights of the Round, and Phoenix are all stunning examples of Final Fantasy VII's rightful first place in this category. The fourth Limit Break attacks are also worthy of mention, as are the pre-rendered FMV sequences, and every other aspect of this awe-inspiring RPG.

THE MOST CAPTIVATING DESIGN

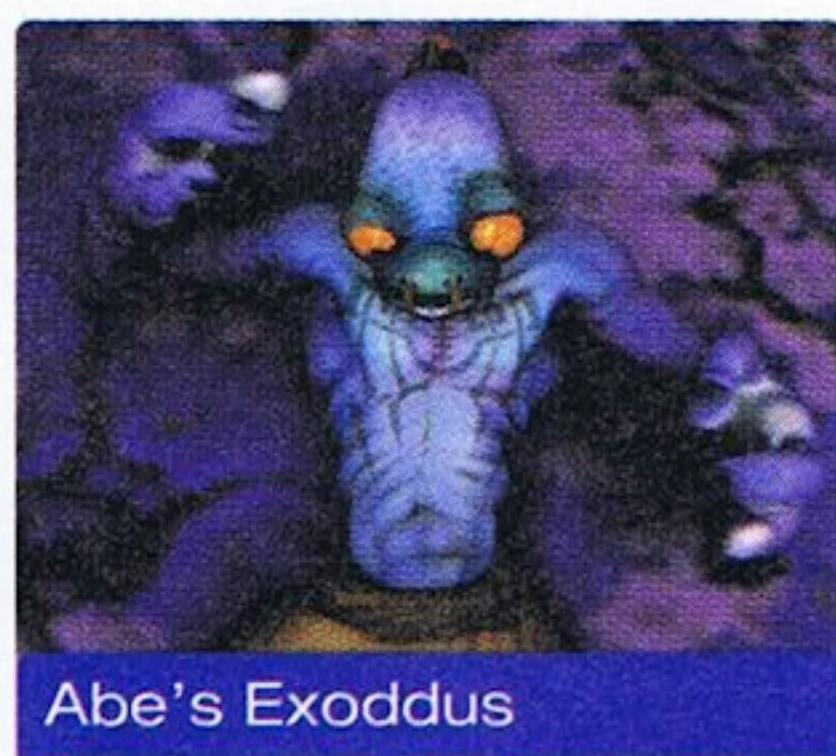
Metal Gear Solid	53%
Silent Hill	21%
Abe's Exoddus	15%
Bust a Groove	4%
Shadow Madness	3%
Other	4%

More than half the votes to MGS, and rightly so. The character designs for the main characters were haunting watercolour masterpieces, the weapons and settings all looked utterly realistic and the overall package summed up near-future warfare just with what met the eye. To play MGS is to swallow a fishhook.

THE BEST TITLE SCREEN

Metal Gear Solid	43%
Abe's Exoddus	36%
WWF Warzone	9%
Bust A Groove	6%
Other	6%

Understated green computer text never goes astray and ended up giving Metal Gear Solid the edge over Abe's Exoddus, even with its adorable humanoid mascot. However, we all wonder why Syphon Filter received so few votes, as it clearly copied the title screen of Metal Gear Solid as closely as it could. Very swish indeed!

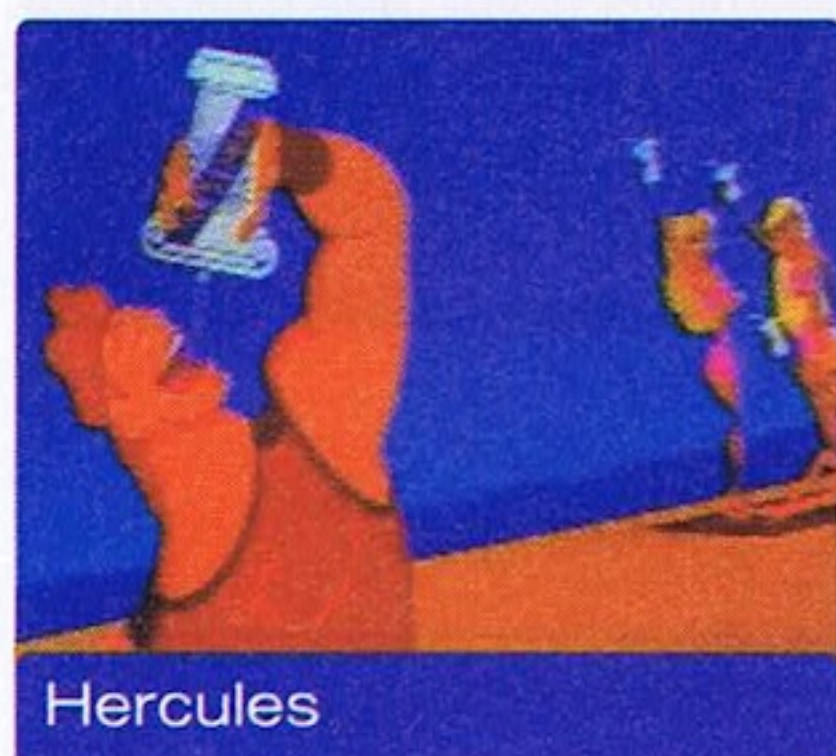


Abe's Exoddus

THE MOST TASTEFUL USE OF FMV

Abe's Exoddus	30%
Ghost In The Shell	23%
Ridge Racer Type 4	16%
Tenchu: Stealth Assassins	17%
Final Fantasy VII	6%
Metal Gear Solid	3%
Other	5%

The opening sequence of Abe's Exoddus was entered into the American Academy Awards for Best Animated Film. It's didn't win, but not for lack of magic on its part. A close second in this contest is Ghost In The Shell, with its movie quality cel animation and character designs by Masamune Shirow.



Hercules

THE MOST TASTELESS USE OF FMV

Disney's Hercules	46%
MK Mythologies: Sub Zero	25%
Global Domination	13%
Tarzan	10%
Other	6%

What happens when you try to give a lame platform game a dose of credibility with animated segues from Disney's latest butchered fairy tale? Really, really, really tasteless FMV. Even a pallid Mortal Kombat spin off pales before their audacity. Tarzan reveals that Disney are repeat offenders. It's not as though it was a one off either.

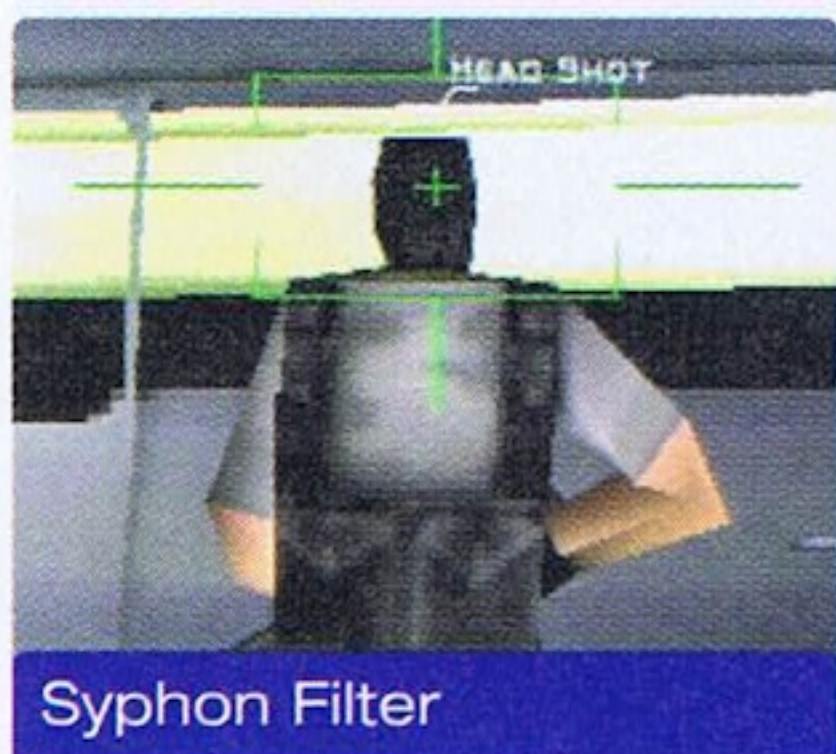


Metal Gear Solid

THE MOST QUOTABLE GAME

Metal Gear Solid	64%
Gex 3	22%
Bust A Groove	6%
Duke Nukem Time To Kill	2%
Final Fantasy VII Platinum	2%
Other	4%

Metal Gear Solid was jam-packed with genius supervillains, grizzled veterans and American accents. This is all fertile soil for quotable quotes and the writers on this game really went to town. "I have to swat down a couple of bothersome flies." Love it, love it, love it.



Syphon Filter

THE MOST STYLISH GAME EVER

Syphon Filter	38%
GTA: London 69	28%
Bust A Groove	24%
Tomb Raider III	2%
Tony Hawk Skateboarding	2%
Final Fantasy VII	2%
Other	4%

Syphon Filter has been a really popular choice with the fans for 1999. The opening sequence, the cut scenes, and the menus of the game all feature some extremely cool looking green phosphor screens unfolding in a rather authoritative, FBI kind of fashion. Grand Theft Auto: London came a worthy second place, with it's excellent cockney mod stylings bringing the 60s back to life.

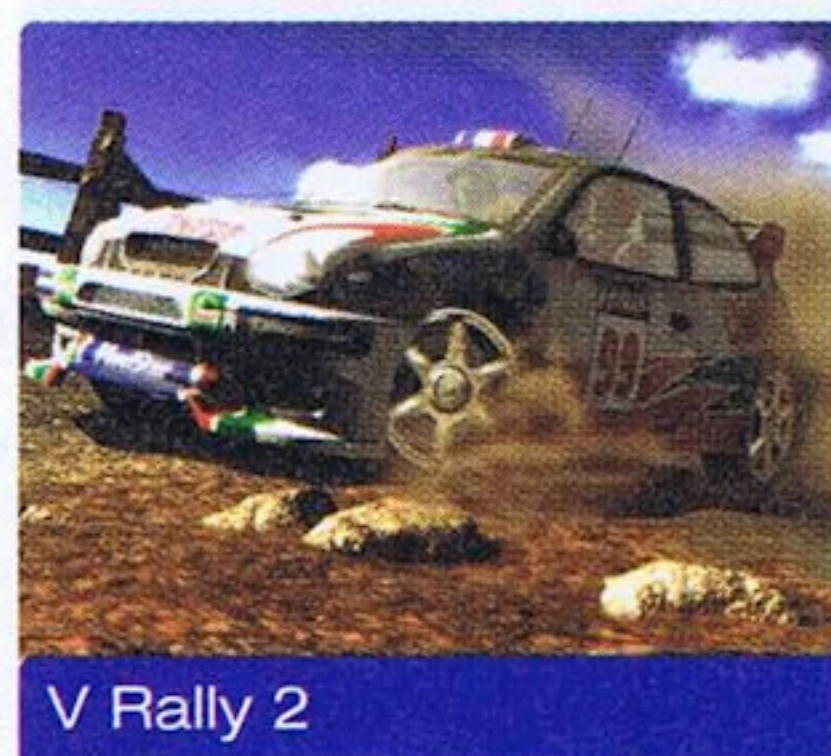


Silent Hill

THE HARDEST GAME

Silent Hill	36%
Kurushi Final	18%
Abe's Exoddus	13%
Tenchu: Stealth Assassins	12%
Rainbow Six	3%
Metal Gear Solid	2%
Tomb Raider III	2%
Final Fantasy VII Platinum	2%
Other	12%

No surprises here. Silent Hill was bloody hard, especially since it encouraged the player to stroll around in the dark with all the lights off as the best means of survival.



V Rally 2

THE FASTEST GAME

V Rally 2	34%
Ridge Racer Type 4	14%
Omega Boost	12%
Monaco GP	10%
Sports Car GT	7%
Rollcage	6%
Wip3out	5%
Wipeout 2097	3%
Gran Turismo	3%
Need 4 Speed 5	2%
Other	4%

V Rally 2 runs fast. Even in four player split screen mode, it's tolerably smooth. The level of trackside detail only improves the overall impression of reckless offroad mayhem. Also, kudos to RRT4, and its rock solid, silky smooth, swish and sterile cityscapes.

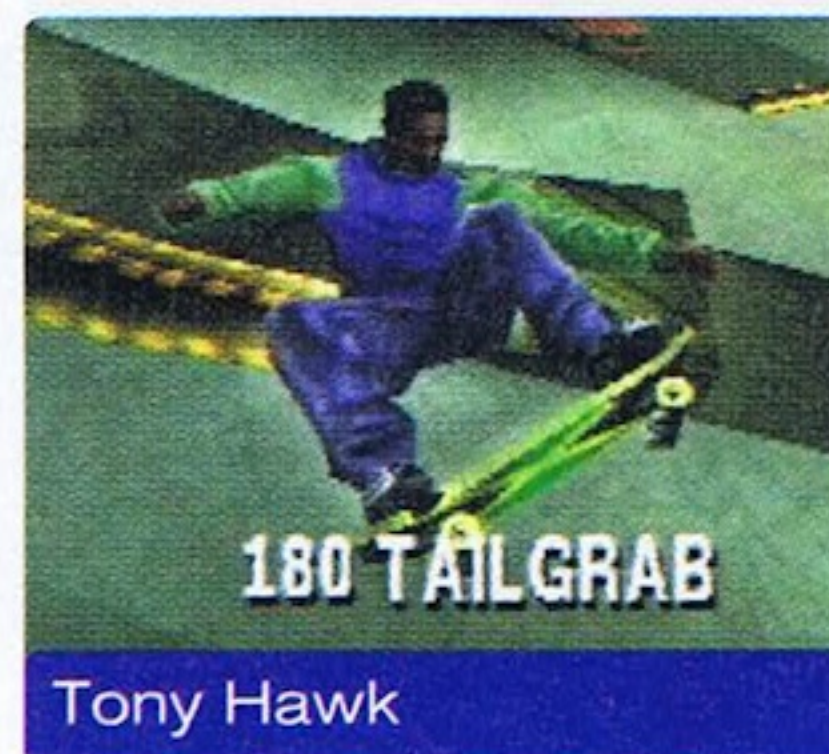


Silent Hill

THE MOST DISTURBING GAME

Silent Hill	52%
Shadowman	27%
Akuji the Heartless	12%
Livewire	4%
Soul Reaver	4%
Lemmings	1%

It's fitting the horror game of the year gets this one. The way Silent Hill warped reality and confused the player was overt and shocking, often subtle. The breakdown of reality and everything you thought you believed in sneaks up on you in this game, gnawing on your mind like maggots in carrion.

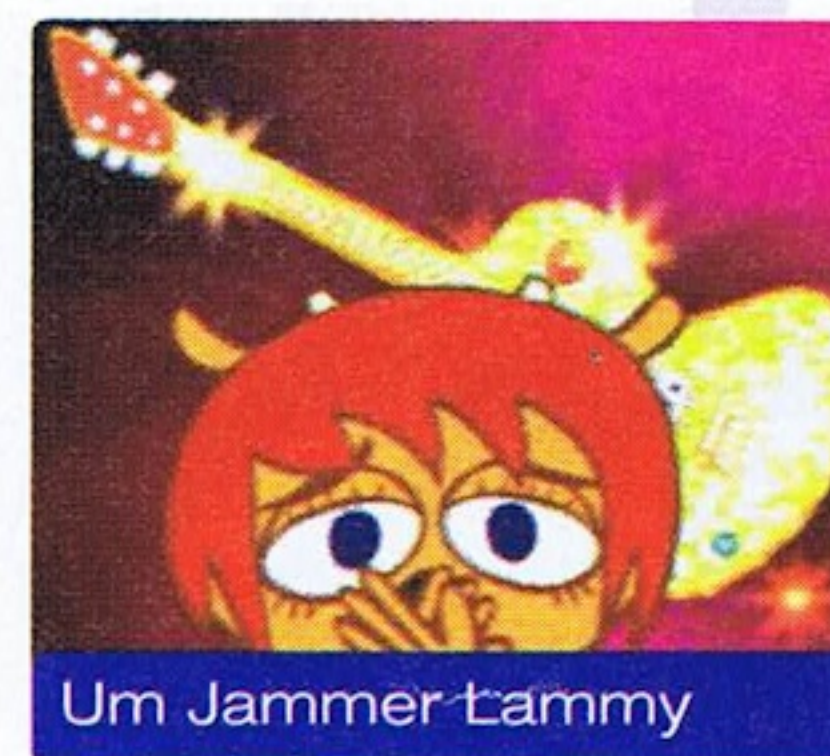


Tony Hawk

THE FRIENDLIEST GAME

Tony Hawk Skateboarding	40%
Devil Dice	21%
Yo Yo's Puzzle Park	15%
Bust A Move 4	13%
Mr Domino	2%
Rugrats	2%
Other	7%

A no-brainer, this one. Tony Hawk takes a difficult sport and puts it in the hands of the masses. It's easy to get a grip on, and easy to get hooked on its simple game dynamics and colourful visuals. Tony Hawk defeated all the cutesy puzzlers by virtue of its accessibility and universal appeal.

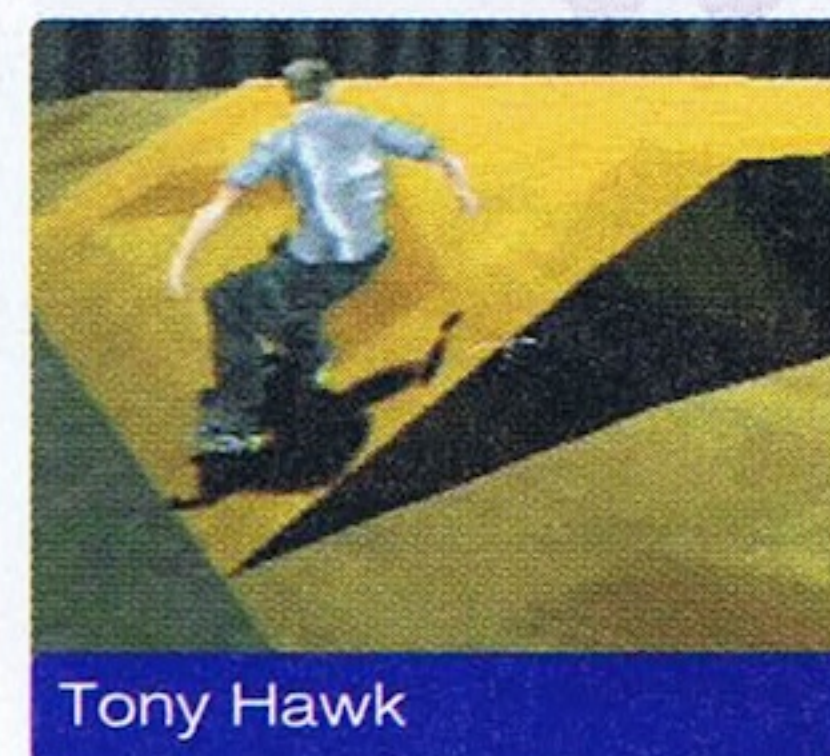


Um Jammer Lammy

THE TRIPPIEST GAME

Um Jammer Lammy	35%
Music	20%
Psybadek	18%
Mr. Domino	12%
Bomberman Fantasy Race	11%
Other	4%

In a recent interview, the Japanese musical prodigy behind Parappa and Lammy said that certain chemicals were a heavy influence on his games, and that the buttons on the PlayStation controller looked like little mushrooms. Um Jammer Lammy has trippy graphics in spades, and it's characters are warped in more ways than one.



Tony Hawk

THE CHICK-MAGNET AWARD

Tony Hawk Skateboarding	50%
Bust A Groove	20%
Final Fantasy VII Platinum	12%
Bust A Move 4	5%
Micro Machines V3	5%
Devil Dice	3%
Crash Bandicoot: Warped	2%
Other	3%

Who knows what really lurks in the nebulous depths of female consciousness? Whatever it is, it likes Tony Hawk. Oh sure, there are puzzle games, and RPGs with sympathetic characters, and even zany dance games to get them giggling, but above all chicks dig Tony Hawk. It is the natural order of things.





Crash Bandicoot: Warped



Driver



Tony Hawk



Point Blank 2



Spice World

THE EASIEST GAME

Crash Bandicoot: Warped	32%
Ridge Racer Type 4	30%
Megaman Battle & Chase	12%
Yo Yo's Puzzle Park	8%
Rugrats	5%
Spyro The Dragon	2%
Metal Gear Solid	2%
Other	9%

While pushing the genre to its limits, Crash Bandicoot Warped is a kiddies game for little kids. It's a linear platform game with repetitive gameplay. Some found Ridge Racer Type 4 too easy not to be insulted.



Metal Gear Solid

THE BEST INSOMNIA-INDUCING GAME

Metal Gear Solid	40%
Final Fantasy VII Platinum	38%
Wipeout 2097	11%
Silent Hill	3%
Other	7%

Not including continues, it takes at least 5 hours to get through Metal Gear Solid. Playing through more than once is rewarded by getting either unlimited ammo or a stealth suit, and the third time round you get to wear a tux. Final Fantasy VII rates a close second by virtue of the fact it would take four days of continuous play to beat.

THE MOST CORRUPTING GAME

Driver	63%
GTA: London 1969	34%
Grand Theft Auto Platinum	2%
Carmageddon	1%

Nothing had come close to emulating the 70s car chase sequence on the PlayStation until Driver came along, and it's done the genre proud. GTA London re-created the feel of the 60's car chase, which is more obscure, but just as silly.



Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time

THE MOST REVOLTINGLY CUTE & SICKENING GAME

Bugs Bunny: Lost In Time	46%
Pocket Fighter	16%
Yo Yo's Puzzle Park	13%
Devil Dice	10%
Croc 2	2%
Spyro The Dragon	2%
Rascal	2%
Rugrats	2%
Other	7%

Bugs Bunny, The Game, is sickening, and parades the mandatory cuteness that we foist on our youngsters in the belief that we're nurturing their development, instead of just warping them.

THE MOST INNOVATIVE GAME

Tony Hawk Skateboarding	33%
Metal Gear Solid	30%
Ape Escape	21%
Tenchu: Stealth Assassins	11%
Trap Runner	3%
The Unholy War	2%

Tony Hawk took the disaster-prone genre of arcade skating game and made something magical.



Silent Hill

THE MOST ANTI-SOCIAL GAME

Silent Hill	26%
Driver	20%
Syphon Filter	22%
Abe's Exoddus	15%
Legend of Kartia	8%
Final Fantasy VII	4%
Metal Gear Solid	2%
Other	3%

Silent Hill won this category on two fronts. The action in the game is hardly manifest of a civilised society, and obsessing over finishing it will isolate you from your friends.

MOST SOCIAL GAME

Point Blank 2	38%
V Rally 2	26%
Micro Machines V3	19%
Rampage: Universal Tour	5%
Poy Poy 2	3%
Other	9%

Point Blank 2 recreates the atmosphere of a shooting gallery in your own home. Even the four player versatility of V Rally 2 is no match for it.



Tomb Raider III

THE MOST GRATUITOUS USE OF SILICONE BREASTS

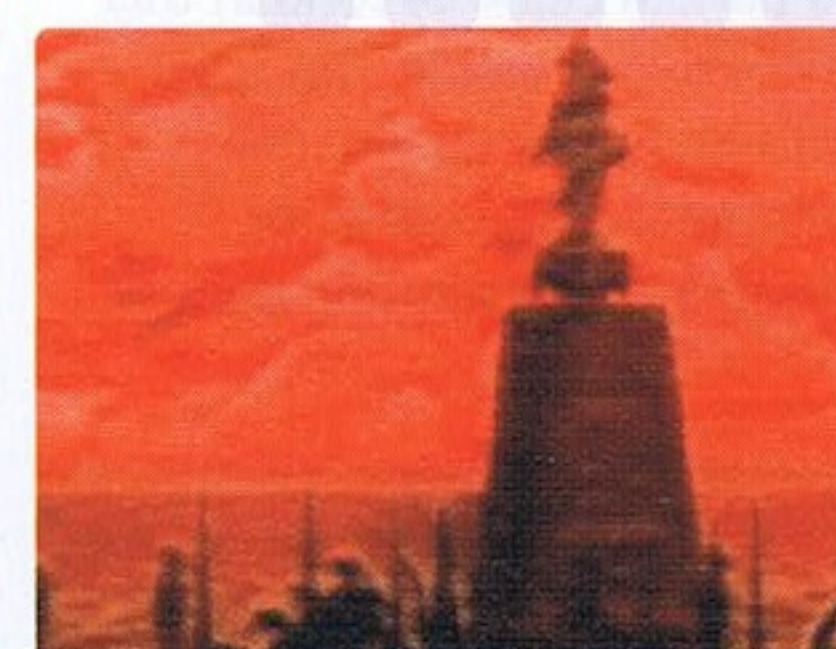
Tomb Raider III	53%
Dead or Alive	45%
Evil Zone	2%

This was a two horse race and only the icon that is Tomb Raider could hope to win. Still, the harmonic motion from Dead or Alive has a cult that's almost as strong. It's a close call. We think it's only because so few people have actually seen Evil Zone's opening FMV that it received so few votes.

THE SHITTIEST GAME

Spice World	66%
Formula 1 '98	10%
Dreams	7%
Legend	5%
Other	12%

No contest. Now that Spice Girls is in a double pack with Bust a Groove, more innocent youths will be twisted by its inanity. Some shit games that didn't make the cut were Hi Octane, Gex, Aironauts and B Movie.

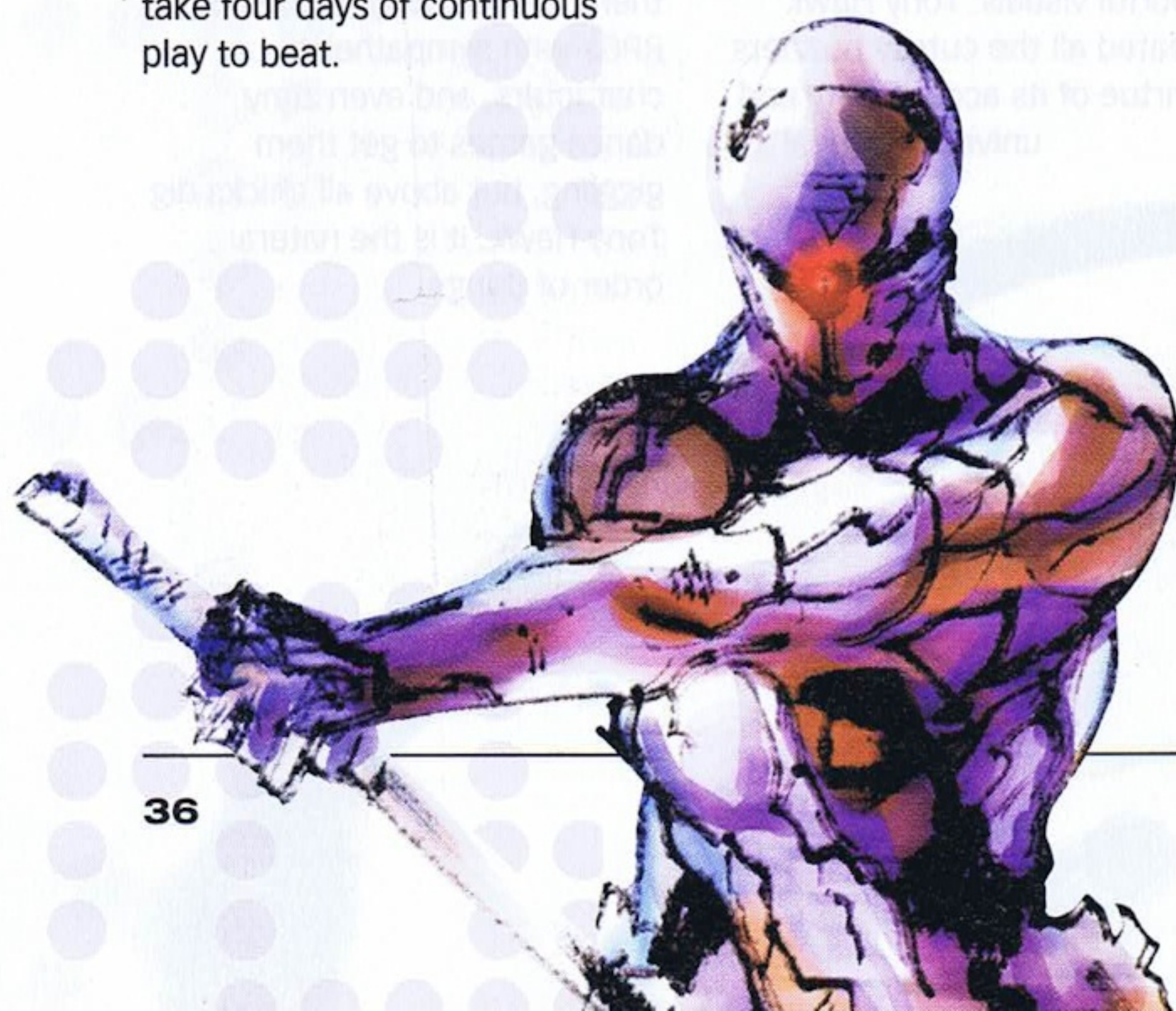


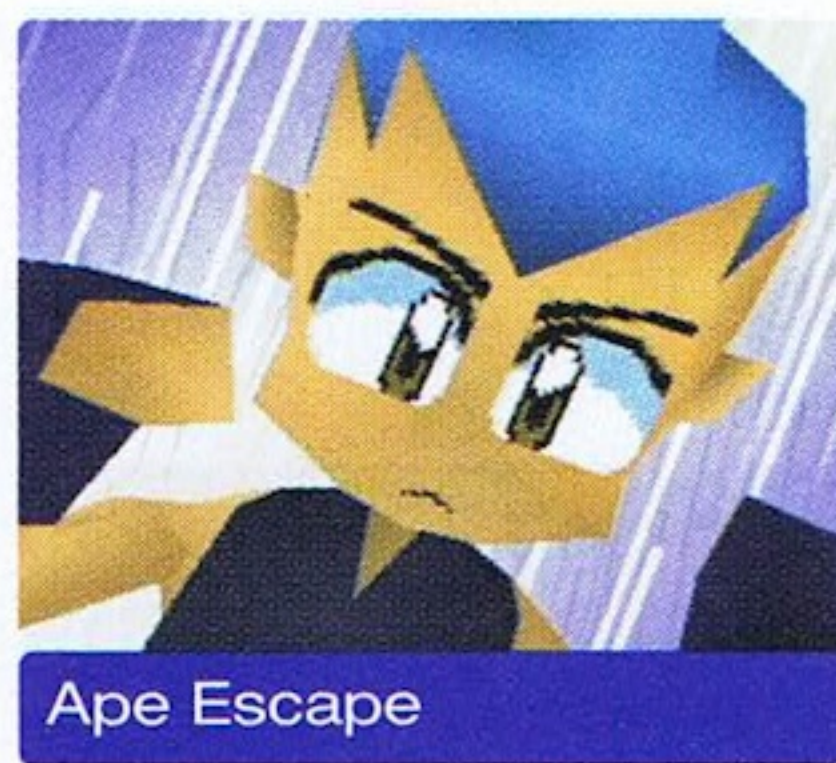
Sentinel Returns

THE MOST MIND-BOGGLING GAME

Sentinel Returns	34%
Global Domination	30%
Player Manager 99	25%
Devil Dice	2%
Abe's Exoddus	2%
Other	7%

Only Sentinel Returns will be used in WWII to extract the reluctant truth from POWs.





Ape Escape

THE MOST ORIGINAL USE OF DUAL SHOCK

Ape Escape	47%
Tomb Raider III	9%
RC Stuntcopter	14%
Metal Gear Solid	9%
Rainbow Six	5%
Gran Turismo	2%
Other	4%

It could be argued that forcing you to buy one is an original use of the Dual Shock control pad, but Ape Escape also made use of all manner of unique control modes to catch the adorable little simians.



Gran Turismo

THE BEST RACING GAME

Gran Turismo	57%
V Rally 2	19%
Colin McRae Rally	15%
Ridge Racer Type 4	2%
Rollcage	2%
Other	5%

With hysteria for the sequel, the fan favourite leaves everything else in the dust. Real cars and realistic driving were a good cocktail for the PlayStation's supreme driving opiate.



Dual Shock

THE MOST USEFUL PERIPHERAL

Dual Shock	81%
G-Con.45	6%
Memory Card	5%
Bayform Super Racer Pad	3%
Link Cable	2%
Other	3%

The Dual Shock is king.



PlayStation Mouse

THE MOST USELESS PERIPHERAL

PlayStation Mouse	61%
JogCon	6%
Logic 3 Speed Pad	14%
High Capac. Memory Cards	3%
Other	6%

The real tragedy of the platform is the neglect suffered on the mouse. There's nothing wrong with it, it's just that hardly any games support it. Hence its lack of utility.



Final Fantasy Platinum

THE BEST VALUE

Final Fantasy VII Platinum	43%
Speed Freaks	13%
Colin McRae Rally Platinum	13%
GTA Platinum	11%
Gran Turismo Platinum	5%
Croc 2 Pack	4%
Heart of Darkness Platinum	2%
Metal Gear Solid	2%
NBA 99	2%
Tony Hawk Skateboarding	2%
Other	3%

A hundred hours of play time for forty bucks? That's Final Fantasy VII Platinum, for you. Some people like it so much they play it all the way through twice, or three times, or more...



Tekken 3

THE BEST FIGHTING GAME

Tekken 3	62%
WWF Attitude	10%
Dead Or Alive	10%
WWF Warzone	8%
Streetfighter Zero 3	6%
Other	6%

The King of Iron Fist is still the king of fighters on PlayStation. 21 characters, hundreds of moves, endless possibilities. Mopping up what's left is a slew of titles that exploit cheesy sexism and wrestlemania.

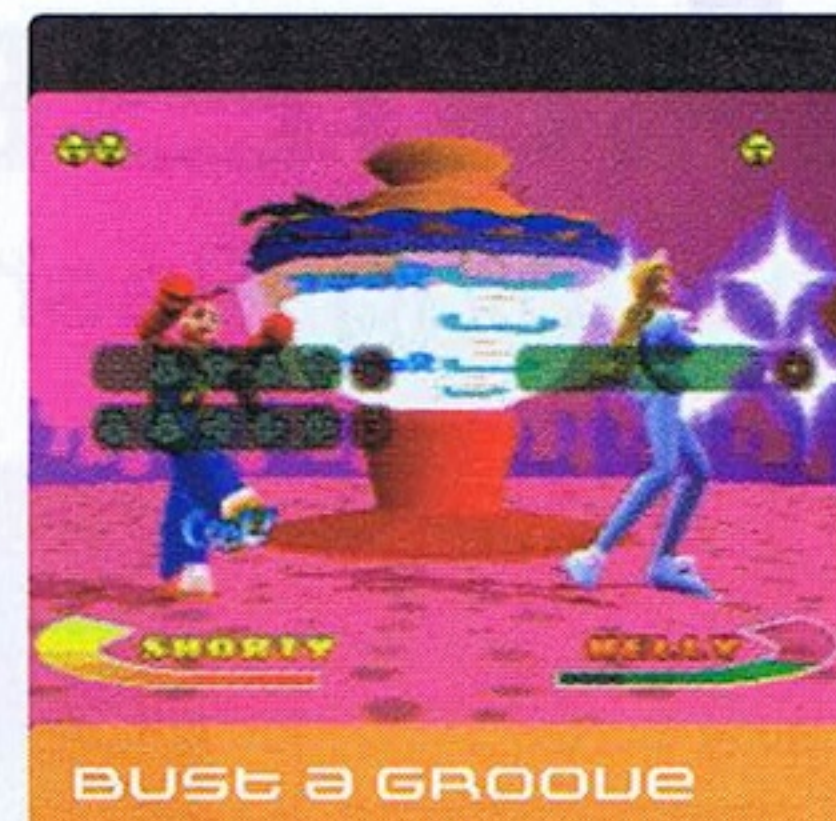


Final Fantasy VIII

THE MOST ANTICIPATED GAME

Final Fantasy VIII	37%
Resident Evil 3	23%
Tomb Raider IV	13%
Grand Theft Auto 2	7%
Dino Crisis	5%
Tenchu 2	6%
Wip3out	4%
Gran Turismo 2	2%
Other	3%

In the months since we printed this survey, several of these games have come out. And none have brought more happiness to PlayStation gamers across the land than Final Fantasy VIII. Mind you, we were indeed perplexed by the fact that Tony Hawk achieved mention in so many other categories and not this one. And where are all you driving fanatics who can't wait for GT2? Is this a statement saying that the first GT is and will be enough for everyone? Are we finally realising the finite potential of a console with only 4Megabytes of random access memory? No, there are simply better games to look forward to.



BUST A GROOVE

KEVIN CHEUNG

The Chick Magnet award going to Tony Hawk has got me baffled. I don't know of many ladies who actually warm to it as much as they have Bust A Groove. I'm also surprised that Gran Turismo 2 isn't all that highly anticipated. Bah - it's just a racing game.



QUAKE II

HILLOUS LESSLIE

The Useless Peripheral award cracked me up, and I know that the PlayStation Mouse got it because few first-person shooters have been designed to use it (hooray for Quake II) and real-time strategy fans wouldn't waste their time on the grey box.



WIP3OUT

JAMES COBBEE

Since Wip3out was released just after we put this survey together, it sort of fell into a blind spot. It could have cleaned up in the racing and music stakes, but missed by a hair. Just as well, it's a controversial title that left many fans scratching their heads.



AND THE WINNER IS...



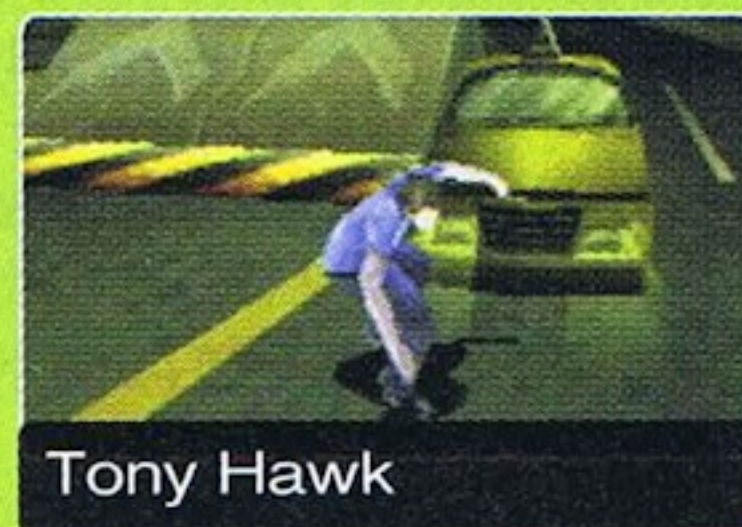
METAL GEAR SOLID

It won four categories in our survey, and hardcore gamefans nationwide know deep down even though it can be unusual and intimidating to get into, that Metal Gear Solid provided the player with style, kick-arse hardware and movie-quality dialogue. Combined with the VR mission disk, it represents a package not only of entertainment value, but of class.

RUNNERS UP



Silent Hill



Tony Hawk

ROBBIT MON DIEU

Jumping Flash is back! But where oh where are the Muu Muus?

FACT FILE

■ Publisher

Sony

■ Developer

Rockets and Candy

■ Genre

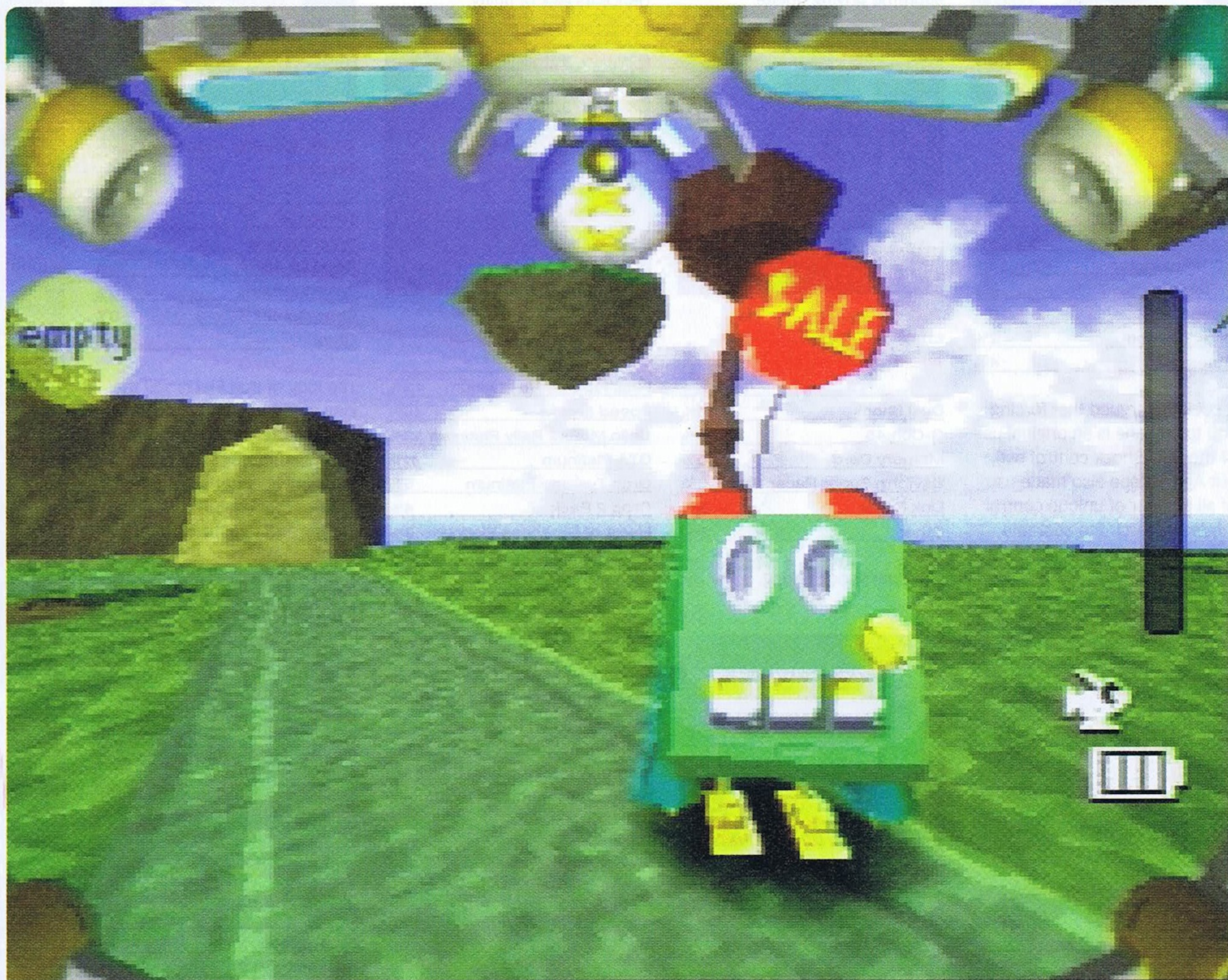
3D platformer

■ Players

One

■ Expectations

Those who buy it will be transported into a lovely fantasy world where fun is impossible to avoid



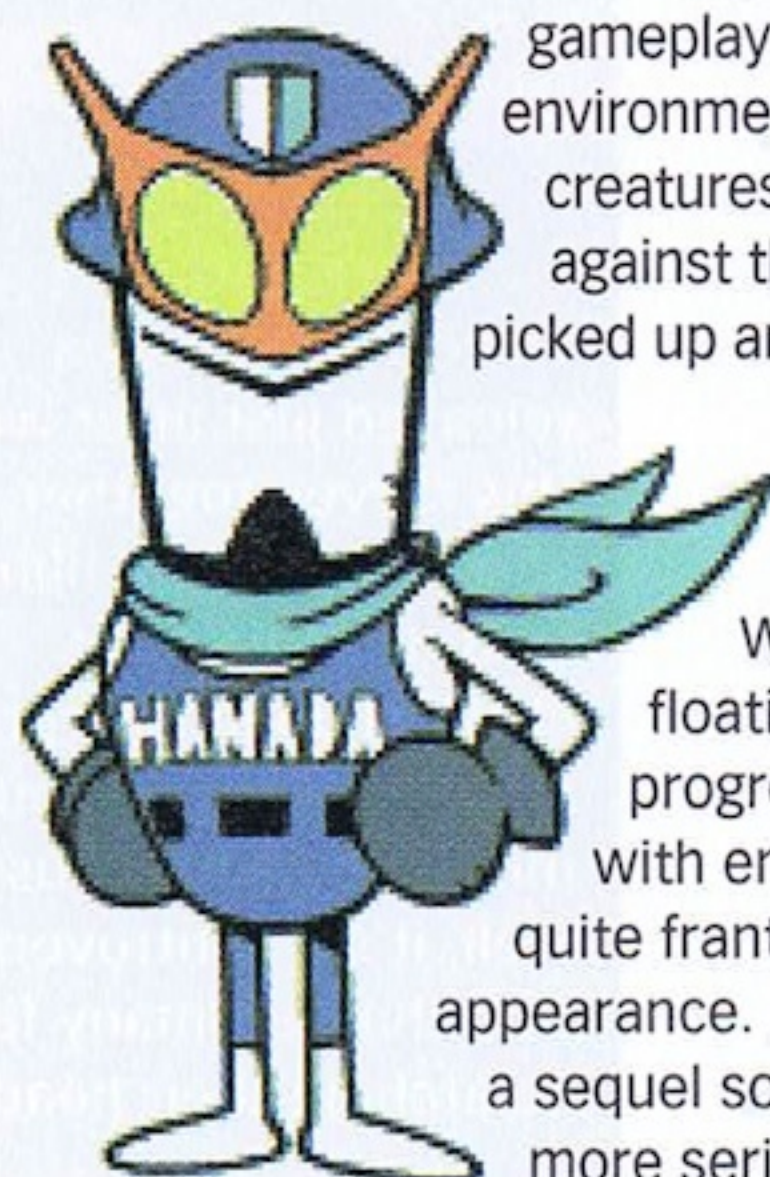
In the new Flash, you buy your weapons from a little cash register robot instead of finding them

One of the earlier releases on PlayStation, Jumping Flash was notable for its quirky presentation and world design. Skillfully adapting elements of the side scrolling platformer's gameplay to a full 3D, first person presentation, it combined plenty of shooting and puzzle solving elements and was highly praised by most of the press.

Some went as far as proclaiming it as a revolutionary title of sorts. Piloting a *Robbit*, essentially a robot and rabbit hybrid, the gameplay involved exploring the environment to find stranded mushroomy creatures called Muu Muu. A constant race against the clock, the little critters must be picked up and the exit to the next level found before time runs out.

MASAMUNE SHIROW

With sprawling levels set on floating continents that become progressively more complex and filled with enemies, the action was often quite frantic, despite the game's cute appearance. It was popular enough to spawn a sequel some time later, as well as the more serious, quasi-related *Ghost in the*



Nothing like letting off a little steam



The kiwis still abound. Oooh! I'm scared!

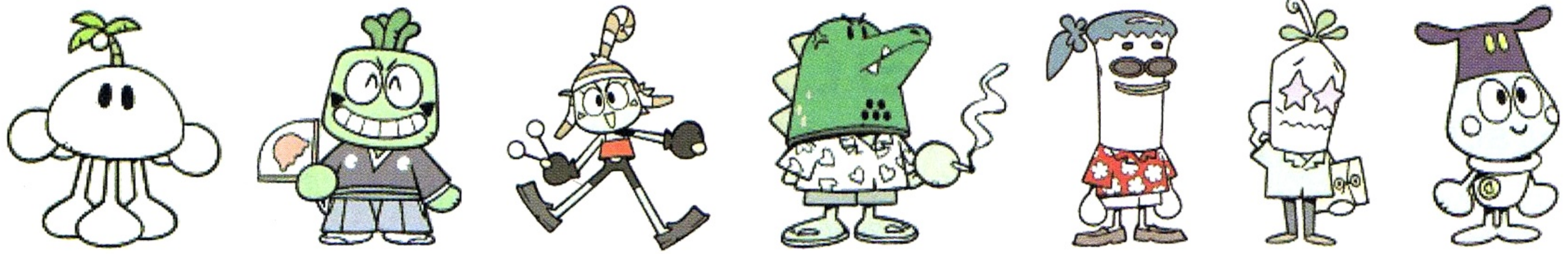
Shell, based on renowned comic artist Masamune Shirow's best selling manga.

A huge fan of Jumping Flash, Masamune Shirow wanted to do his own version of the title using the game's graphics engine, but set in his world. Looking rather closely at some of his 'self portraits' in various comics, you could often spot a PlayStation or Muu Muu in the background. His pitch to the developers was successful.

Jumping Flash's third incarnation, *Robbit mon Dieu* was released in Japan in November

and a sample disk was also issued by Sony during the September's Tokyo Game Show. From the fabulous CG intro, the situation appears to have changed slightly since the last release.

Once again piloting the ubiquitous *Robbit* mecha, your character is now working as a member of what looks like some kind of galaxy rescue/police squad. Beyond rescuing the kidnapped Muu Muu of the earlier titles, your prime directive is now to help out anyone in need of assistance.



GRAPHIC TWEAKING

For longtime fans, the game's visuals haven't changed much. Nor have the *Robbit*'s movement capabilities or weapons been upgraded in any significant way, retaining the missiles and smart bomb. There is a new Stomp move that brings you down to the ground fast, but it is the game's structure and presentation that has been most significantly tweaked for this latest release.

To describe it as level based would be redundant: combined with more pre-mission movie sequences than ever before, featuring many cast members in need of help and narration after mission completion, the game is perhaps better described as episode based.

In most movie sequences generated by the in-game graphics, character's performances are conveyed via gestures and voice acting (the latter which sometimes unfortunately leaves a lot to be desired). *Robbit mon Dieu* goes one better by incorporating animated expressions

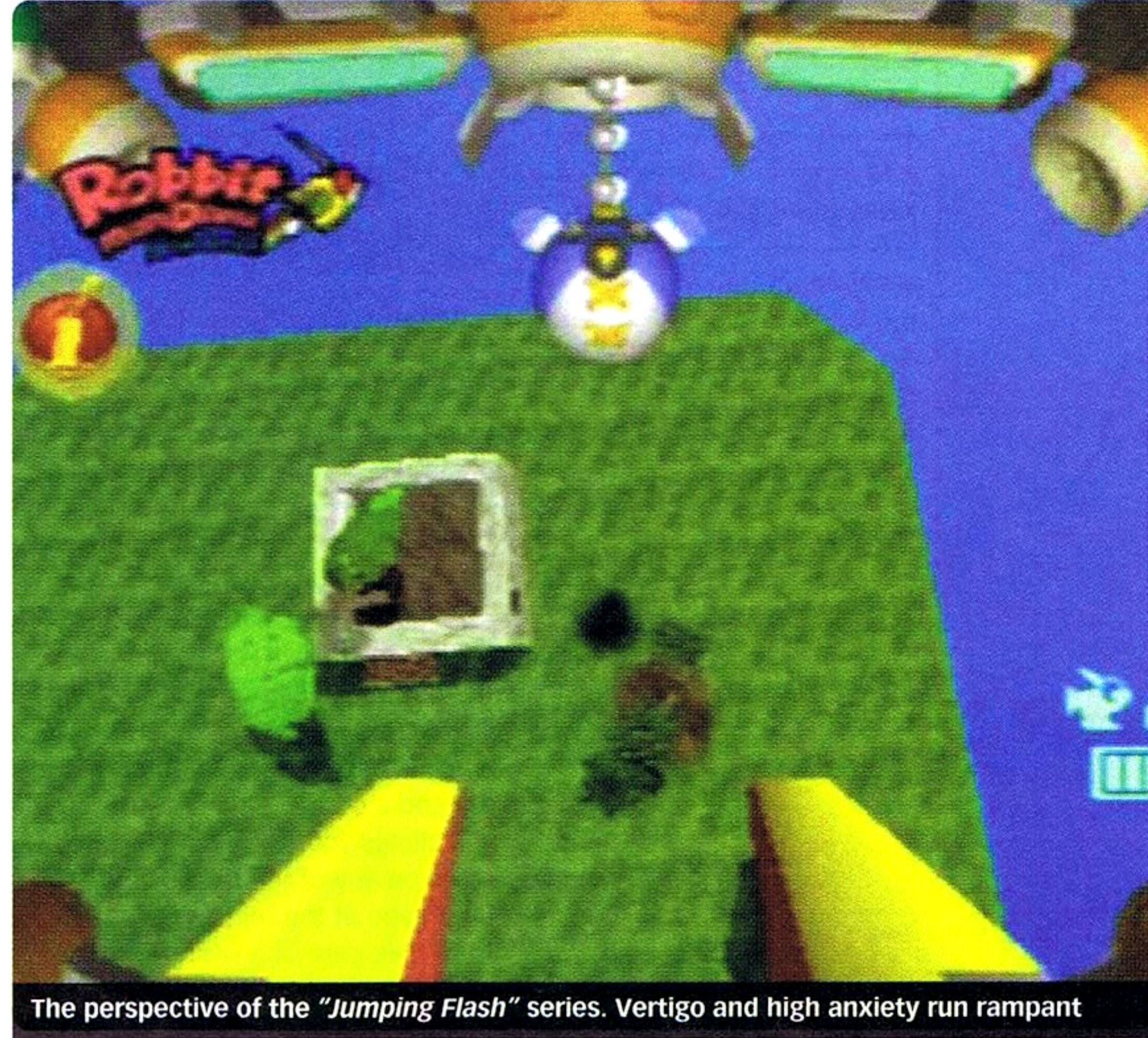
on characters, complete with moving mouths that approximately sync with the dialogue. Granted, it's only been achievable due to the character's simple designs, but the results really bring the scenes to life.

INDIVIDUAL EPISODES

The individual episodes broaden the gameplay to beyond the prequels premise of finding an exit to the next level. In fact, some of them don't even require any jumping, puzzle solving or exit searching at all.

They can involve anything from assisting a little kid finding his way home (basically the originals gameplay) to helping starving Muu Muu shoot down some birds flying by so they can have a snack. From the flock, you must shoot down at least twenty of them.

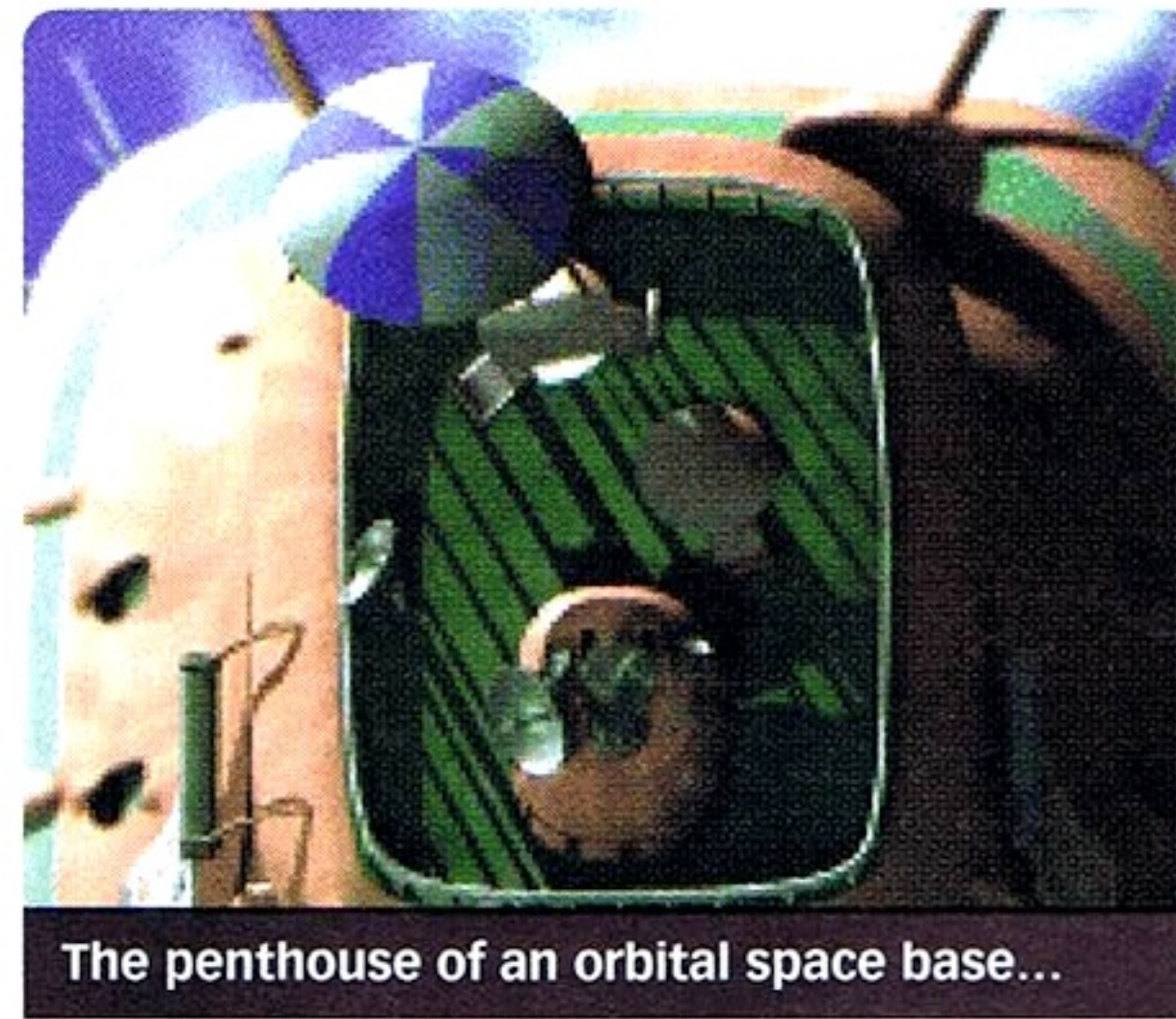
You also meet a rival who challenges *Robbit* to a freefall coordination test as well as a carrot farmer who asks you to save his crop from hungry moles by shooting them. It almost plays



The perspective of the "Jumping Flash" series. Vertigo and high anxiety run rampant



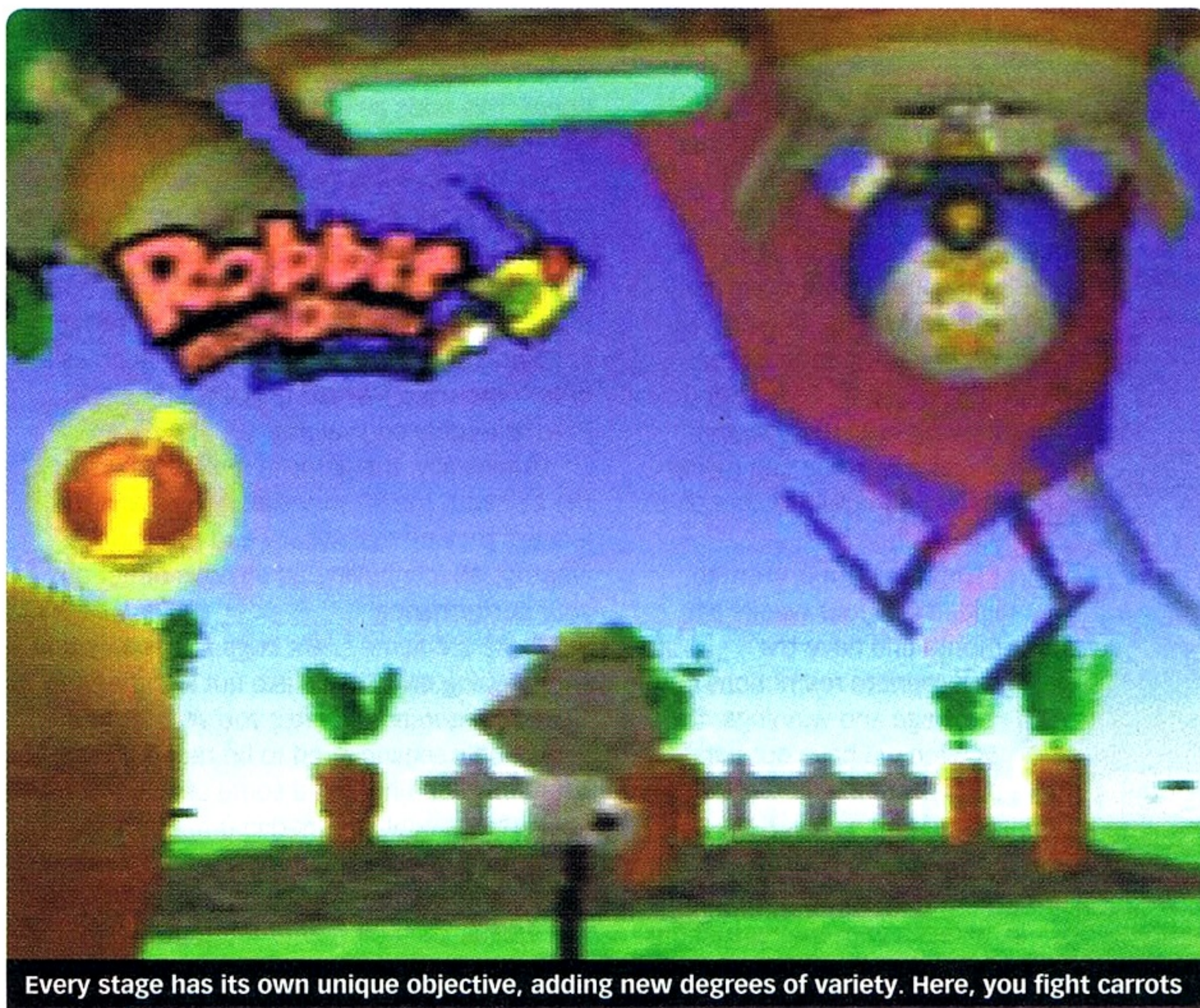
Happy, inoffensive creatures. That jump



The penthouse of an orbital space base...



...Hovering exactly the way a brick doesn't



Every stage has its own unique objective, adding new degrees of variety. Here, you fight carrots

like the arcade machines where you use a soft hammer to bash critters that randomly pop up from an arrangement of holes.

The incorporation of character interaction gives the game an extra RPG element. It's been a popular gameplay element lately across genres. Namco's *Ridge Racer* and *Ace Combat 3* (in Japan at least) for example now feature large casts and an underlying story, added to what used to be a fairly straight forward racing and flight sim/shooter respectively.

Sadly the latter titles anime scenes, reported some issues back, will be dropped for its PAL release. As yet unannounced, should *Robbit mon Dieu* receive an English release, it's likely that the dialogue sequences will be retained. Considering they play such an important part towards the games, it'd be nonsensical without them. More in future.

Amos Wong



GALLOP RACER

First past the post is Gallop Racer from Tecmo

FACT FILE

■ Publisher

TBA

■ Developer

Tecmo

■ Genre

Horse Racing Sim

■ Players

One or two

■ Expectations

A realistic racing simulation that covers all facets of the sport except the TAB.

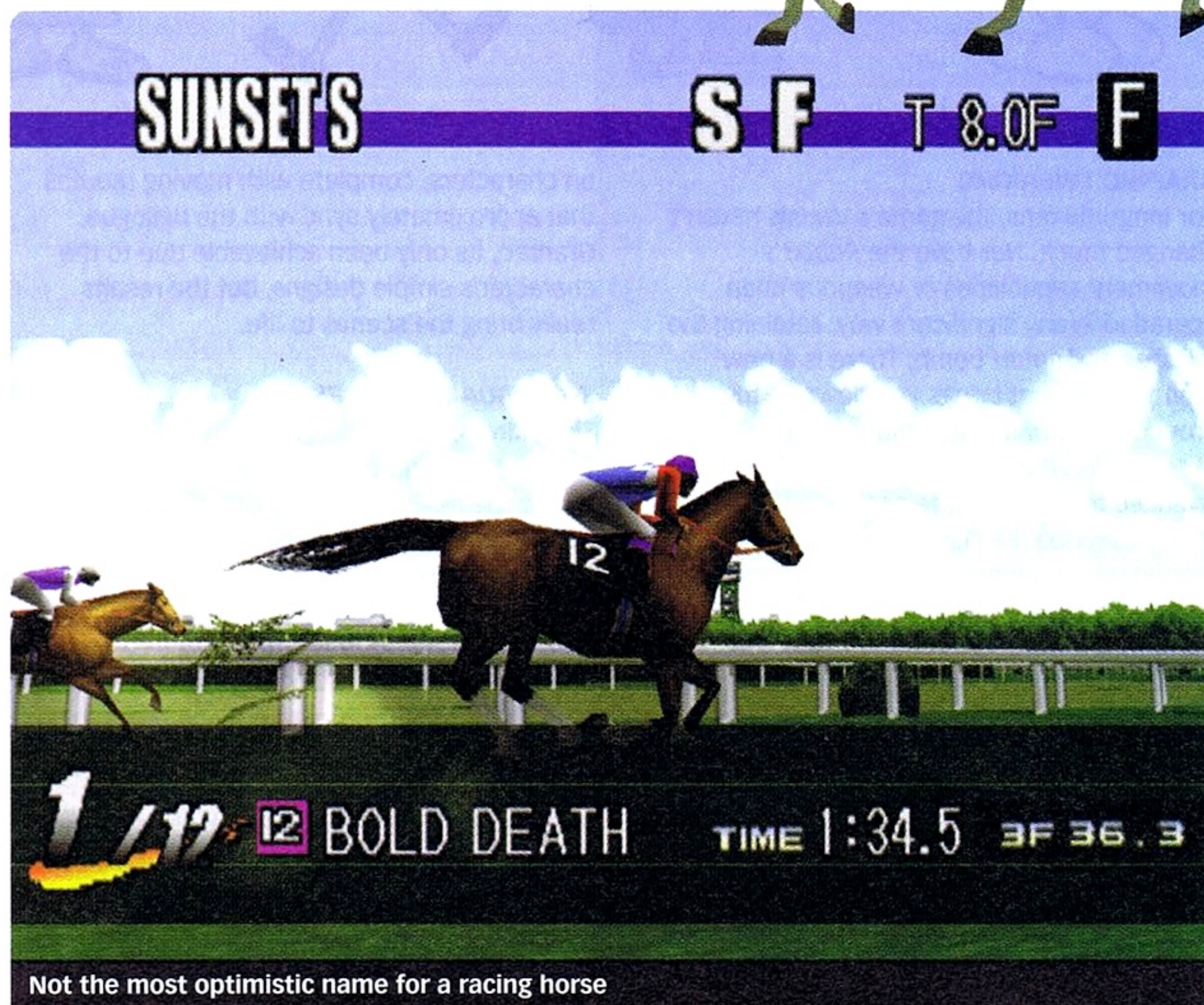


The horses are fed high-energy baked beans

Subtitled "One and Only Road to Victory", the first English horse-racing title on the PlayStation is nearing completion. Japan has benefited from a large number of games based on horse racing, and finally a developer has decided to see how well they're received in the other regions where PlayStations are available.

The game has all the usual elements of a console game - season mode, a two-player versus mode and a practice game. The practice area allows you to try out any one of the 120 horses on any of the tracks under any conditions with you at the reins, or allowing the console to take care of it while you sit back and watch. Two player mode is really just a novelty as the actual racing has more to do with the abilities and characteristics of your

horse than any ability on your part. And that's where the Season game comes in.



Not the most optimistic name for a racing horse



An impressive re-draw distance

RACING THROUGH THE SEASONS

In this scenario, you start out with a set amount of points in which you can buy horses, enter races and pay your monthly registration fee to be in the season. Horses are rated separately for Dirt and Turf racing and have a multitude of characteristics that include speed and stamina and rankings for best distance and how well the horse can gallop at pace and how it responds to the crop.

The races are presented divided into four weeks per month and have the appropriate restrictions on sex, age and winnings. The version we have our hands on is designed for the US market and so has the US racing season with all 212 events available for you to race in, so even with the restrictions you can usually find a number of races per month to enter.

Once you have your steeds, you must enter races to add to your points so that you can continue to participate in the season. There's a trade off with resting your horses after a race and keeping up with the leaders, but this just adds to the enjoyment.

BEST BREED

After you have entered a horse in a number of races and are either tired of them losing all the time or satisfied with their winning performances, you can retire them to your breeding stable. There, you can mix and match the various horses to breed new colts and fillies with the best (and possibly worst) of each horse. This adds an extra dimension to the whole concept and makes it more addictive.

Gallop Racer has been designed with horse racing enthusiasts in mind. The menus and options are full of terms that those who are not experienced with may find it difficult to come to grips with. For instance, when describing the condition of the track abbreviations such as F/F or M/Y are used instead of good old english Firm or Muddy equivalents.

Graphically, the game is really pleasing to the eye with the 3D modeled horses and the jockeys moving realistically and the various weather effects having an obvious effect on your performance.

There are some slight bugs and issues that need ironing out. Things like not knowing the age of the horse until after you've bought it and the US-only season need to be rectified before it gets released here and some of the descriptions could be modified to be more easily understood for the average gamer. If Tecmo address these issues, they could have a real winner on their hands. Keep those eyes peeled for this one.

Andrew Parsons

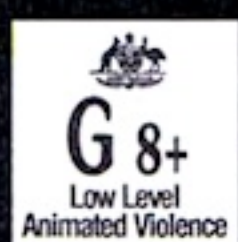
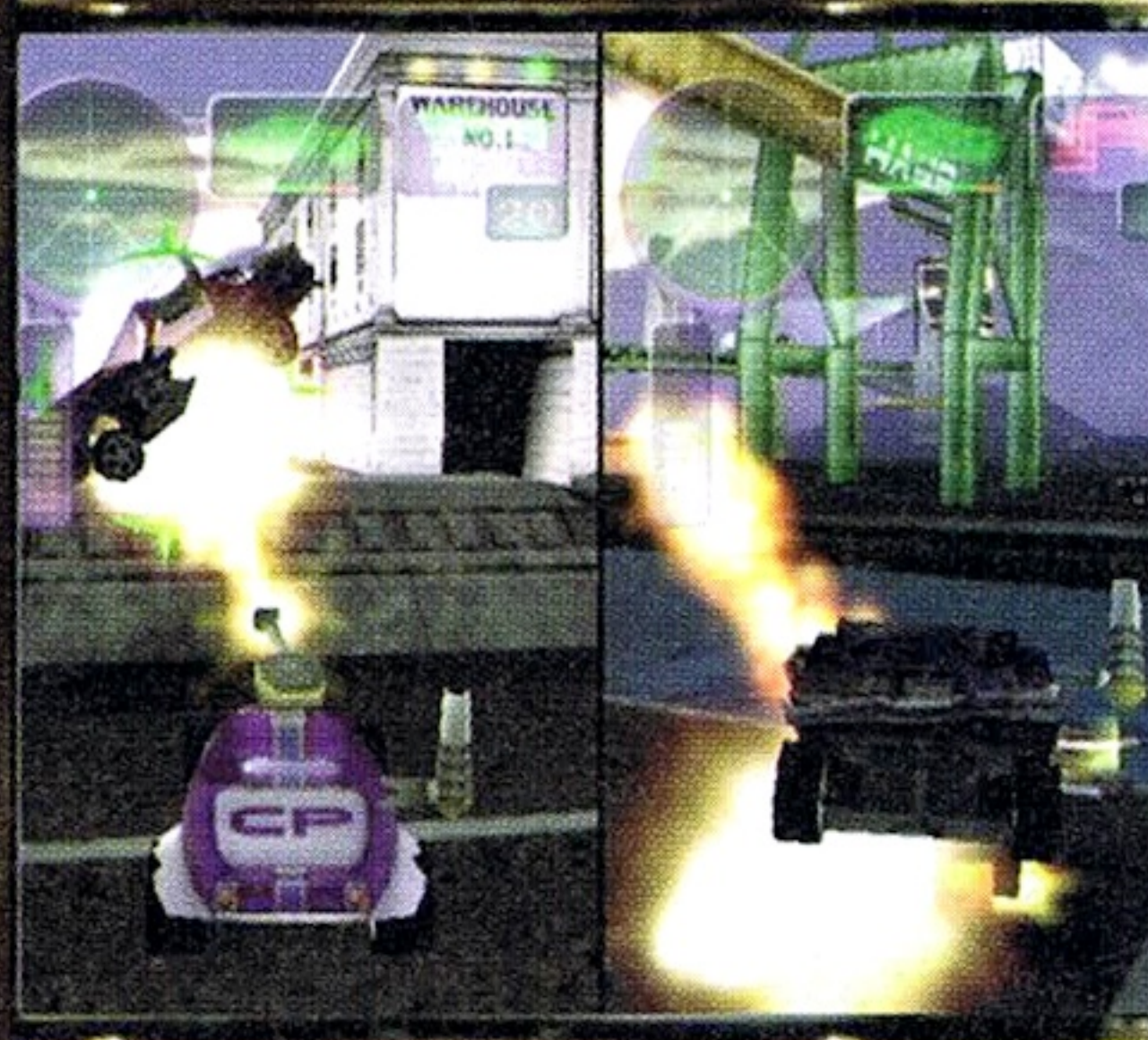
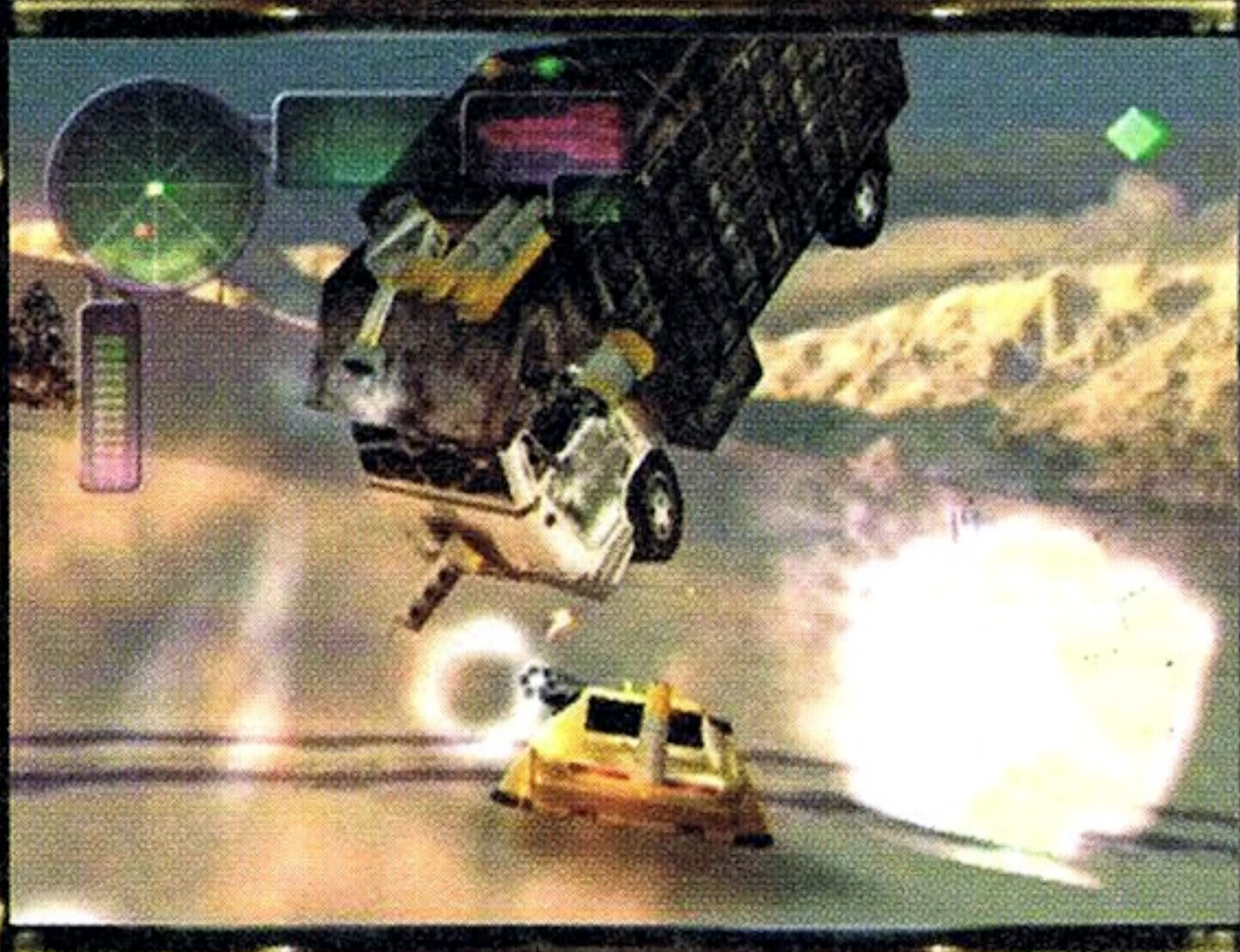


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- New Multiplayer Options

VIGILANTE V8 2ND OFFENSE™

Dreamcast™ screen shots shown.

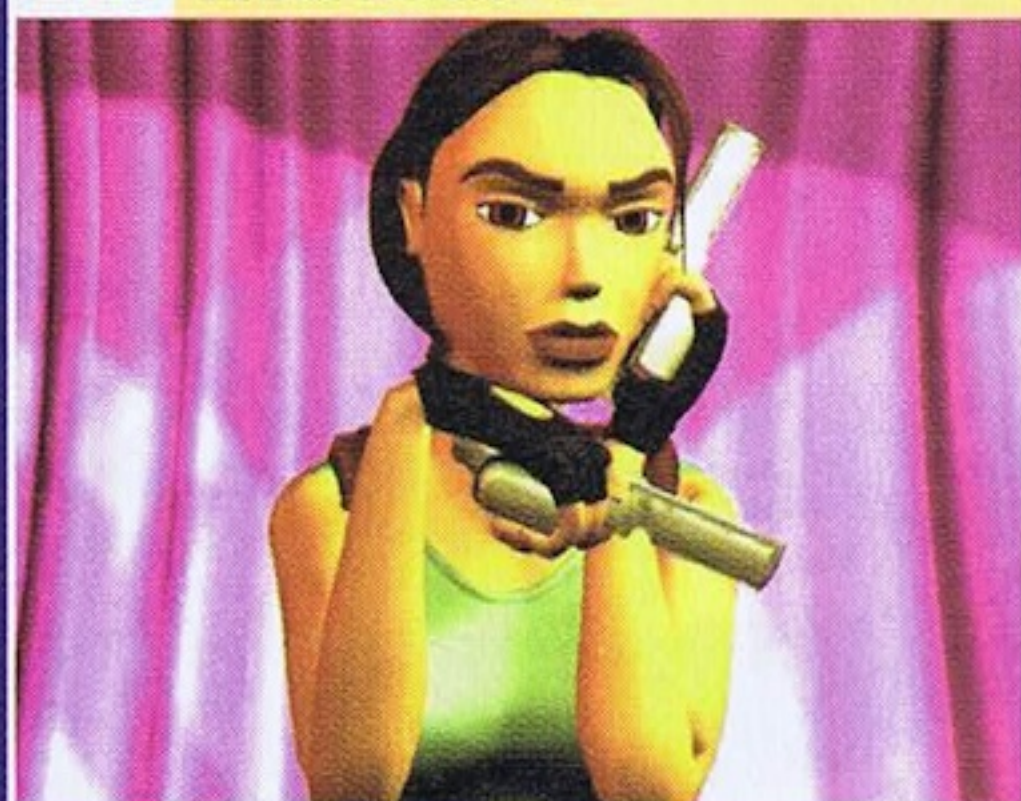


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PlayStation Top Ten

No surprises here. For the layman, Lara defines the video games of our time and PlayStation owners, whether they like it or not, recognise her as the as the greatest champion of their platform. In the wake of her entry, it's a miracle any other games sold at all.

01 Tomb Raider 4



02 Crash Team Racing



03 Quake II



04 Final Fantasy VIII



05 Wu Tang: Taste the Pain



06 Rainbow 6



07 Point Blank 2



08 Gran Turismo Platinum



09 Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver



10 Tony Hawk Skateboarding



What's the crew playing?

Kevin Cheung



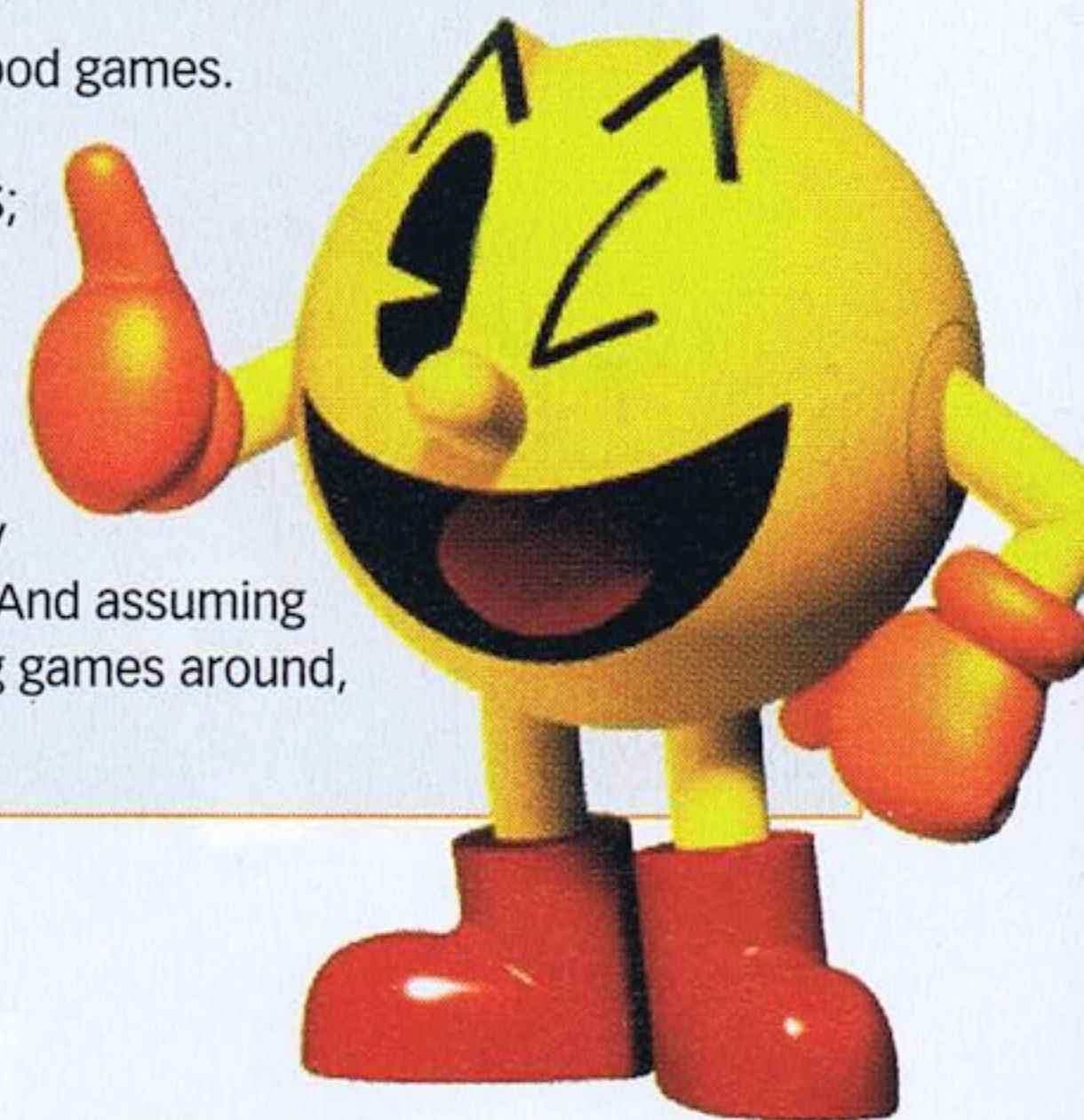
Kevin's Top Five

1. Final Fantasy VIII
2. Pac Man World
3. Tomb Raider 4
4. Street Fighter Alpha 3
5. Quake II

Pac Man World



This month has been filled with surprisingly good games. Ready 2 Rumble turned out to be the best boxing fun I'd had since Punch Out on the NES; and Ehrgeiz - in spite of how much Hillous likes it - only made me yearn more for Tobal 2. The biggest surprise of them all has got to be Pac Man World. It's a bit of a silly game, but it's just too adorable to pass up, especially if you're old enough to remember what he is. And assuming you're not already sick of all the go-kart racing games around, Crash Team Racing is excellent.



Hillous Lesslie



Hillous' Top Five

1. Crash Team Racing
2. Tony Hawk
3. GTA2
4. Soul Reaver
5. Tekken 3

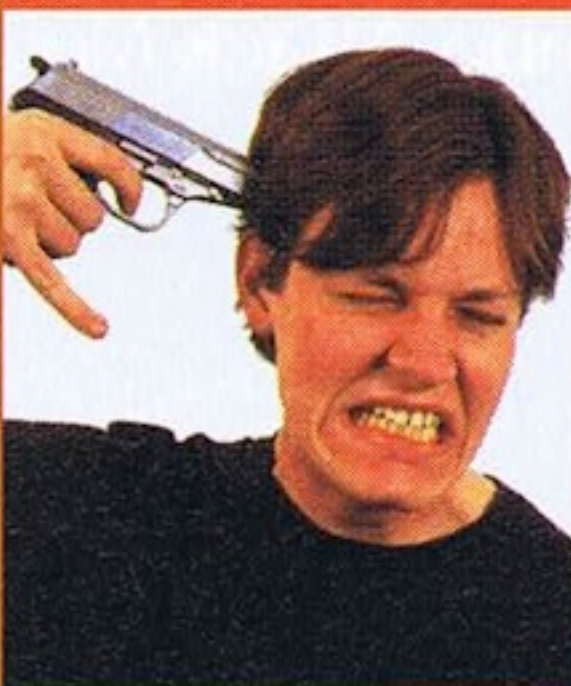
GTA2



GTA2 is just awesome. I've been struggling on the second map for quite a while now, trying to please the Scientists without ticking off the Rednecks and Zaibatsu too much. I particularly love the mission where you have to take a mob of four hitmen armed with machine guns and kill as many Zaibatsu members as possible. It reminded me of the joy I extracted from the Japanese Megaman sequel, *The Misadventures of Tron*, in which six cute little lego men would follow me around and do my bidding, stripping police cars and terrorising innocents. Ah, thank the light for videogames: there to let us vent those frustrations which society deems unfit to be released in public.



James Cottee



James' Top Five

1. Quake II
2. GTA2
3. Wip3out
4. Rainbow 6
5. Pac Man World

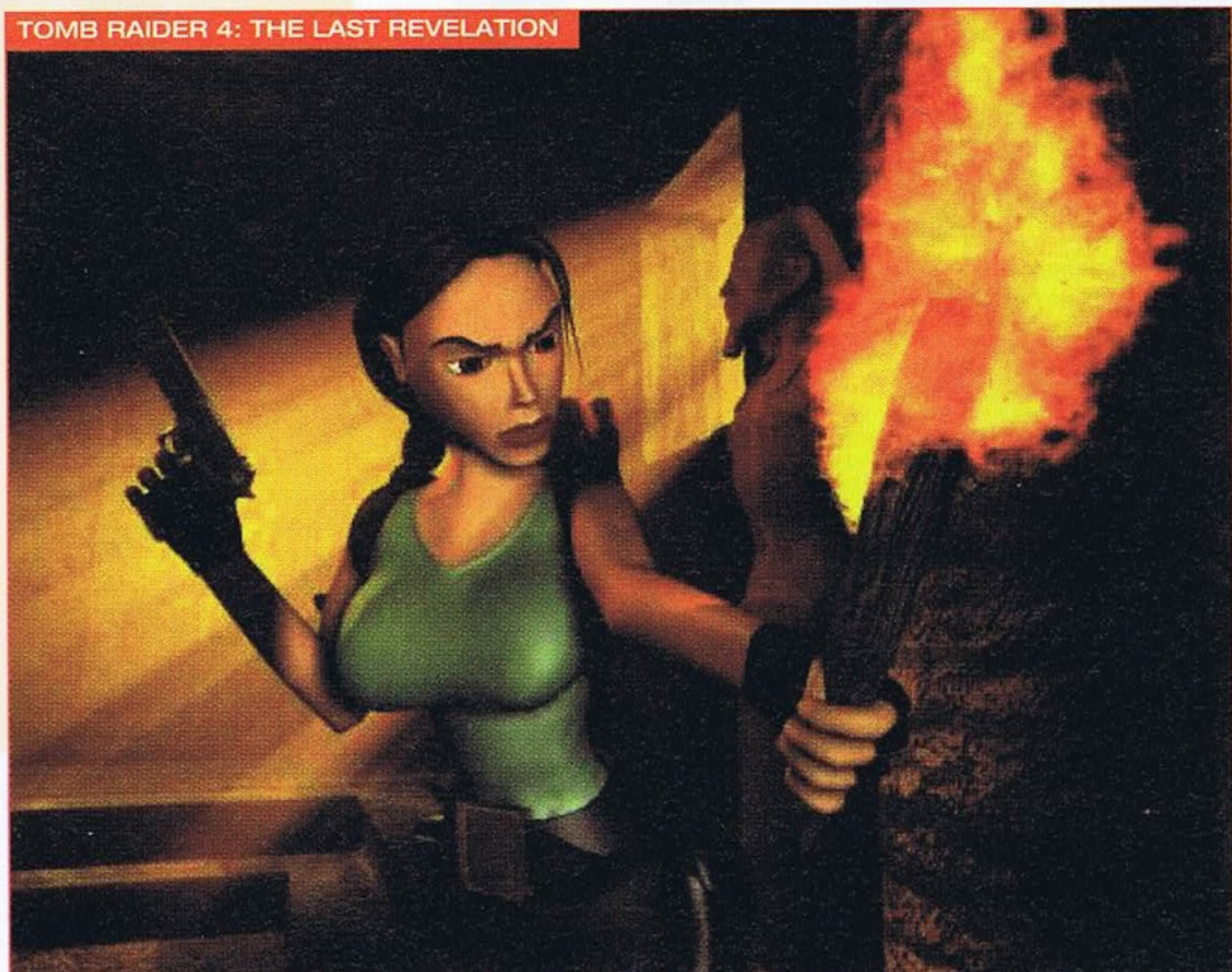
Quake II



It's been on the PC now since the first creatures on Earth mutated their gills into lungs allowing them to walk on land, but Quake II has finally appeared on the PlayStation. We all feared the worst, but deathmatch on the PSX is now a reality, and Kicks Arse. I'm still getting through all those missions in GTA 2, and I'll be blown if I can do the 7th weapon challenge on Wip3out. From there it's diminishing returns, morbidly comparing Rainbow 6 to its PC counterpart, and playing Pac Man at 3am on dark and stormy nights.



TOMB RAIDER 4: THE LAST REVELATION



Every game featured in our PlayTest section has been reviewed independently and objectively by our team of writers. We aim to give an informed and comprehensive idea of what the game is about, and most importantly, whether the game is good or bad. Each game reviewed receives an overall score out of 100 which should be seen in context of the type of game it is and in relation to similar titles it is competing with.

THESE FACTORS ARE AWARDED UP TO FIVE STARS:

GRAPHICS	Does the game look good and has it taken advantage of the available technology?
SOUND	The PlayStation offers developers the potential to create mind blowing audio. Have they?
GAMEPLAY	This is what it boils down to. Is the game enjoyable and fun to play, or will you hurl the joypad at the TV?!
DIFFICULTY	Is the game difficult? Does it take a great deal of skill to play? The higher the mark here, the more difficult the game is.
LIFESPAN	How long can you expect this game to hold your interest? Will you play again after you have beaten it?
PLAYERS	Some games allow two or more players to take part, either alternately or simultaneously, and some can even be linked to a second PlayStation for head-to-head two-player action.
GAME FEATURES	Many games take advantage of after-market devices such as analogue controllers, steering wheels, Sony's PlayStation Mouse, various light guns, the Multi-tap four-player adaptor, memory cards, various peripherals and accessories.
ALTERNATIVES	A selection of games that are similar in concept or appeal to the one reviewed.

WHAT OUR RATINGS MEAN:

91 - 100%	AN INSTANT CLASSIC, YOU MUST PLAY THIS GAME!
81 - 90	EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD, WITH FLAWS YOU'D BARELY NOTICE
71 - 80	A GOOD EFFORT WITH A FEW NIGGLING FLAWS
61 - 70	AN AVERAGE GAME THAT DOES A COMPETENT JOB
51 - 60	HAS SOME NICE IDEAS, BUT COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER
41 - 50	A GAME WITH A GREAT DEAL MORE FLAWS THAN MERITS
31 - 40	THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU BOUGHT A PLAYSTATION FOR!
21 - 30	OH DEAR, SOMETHING HAS GONE HORRIBLY WRONG...
11 - 20	DON'T BOTHER, A WASTE OF BOTH TIME AND MONEY
01 - 10	IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS WITH A COOL BLACK DRINK COASTER!

44 TOMB RAIDER 4: THE LAST REVELATION

To commemorate the last ever Tomb Raider on the current PlayStation, we take a look at the whole Lara phenomenon. There's also a full review

48 READY 2 RUMBLE

Midway's new boxing game is a comic barnstormer and an assault on the senses. Get ready to witness the most outrageous afros ever seen ingame!

50 EHRGEIZ

Squaresoft take their askew view to the world of fighting games. The first ever completely 3D fighter, featuring ranged attacks, Tifa and Cloud!

52 CRASH TEAM RACING

The racing sequences in Crash 3 were so good, they could have based a game around them. Well, now they have. Up to four player karting action!

54 NO FEAR DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING

This rugged and exhilarating sport is finally recreated on the PlayStation

56 NHL FACEOFF 2000

In the race to release the 2000 series of sports titles, it's always interesting to see what products are there to compete with the stablemate titles

57 NHL 2000

Aside from basketball and soccer, ice hockey is EA's other main sports title

58 SHAOLIN

A curious combination of RPG and multiplayer fighting game. Those who found Wu Tang intimidating may prefer to trash Pandas instead

60 PAC MAN 20TH ANNIVERSARY

This beloved little yellow pizza segment has symbolised the struggle at the heart of gaming for a generation. Now he has his own 3D platformer

62 MTV SNOWBOARDING

The MTV corporate machine, ever eager to appear "radical", may have missed the boat with this one. Can it possibly threaten Coolboarders?

63 SMURFS

A smurfing smurf game with very smurfy smurf and a strong smurf flavour

64 KINGSLEY

A platform game starring a fluffy zoo animal. Is it Croc? Is it Gex? No, it's a completely new mascot from Psygnosis called Kingsley

65 DEMOLITION RACER

Not content with the thrills of Destruction Derby or Driver? Get down and dirty with some white-knuckled car-smashing racing action.

66 FOXSPORTS NBA 2000

You need FOXTEL to get the best highlights, news, and overall coverage on your favourite sports. But how well do they fare on the PlayStation?

67 X FILES

A puzzling detective thriller starring everyone's favourite sexy FBI agents. The value this holds to anyone other than an X Phile, though, is uncertain

68 MUSIC 2000

With 24 tracks and over a thousand samples, Codemasters have created an instant techno sequencer of staggering power.

70 INTELLIVISION CLASSICS

A collection of 30 games for the home console nemesis of the Atari 2600

72 MEDIEVIL PLATINUM

You are an undead knight, brought back from oblivion to battle an evil wizard who has turned the entire kingdom into zombies!

72 TENCHU PLATINUM

One of THE best games on the PlayStation, now at a budget price! Play a buff ninja dude or a sexy ninja babe in precise, surgical missions of murder

MODERN MYTH

The Lara Croft Phenomenon

You all know who she is. Hell, I'll even bet that most of your distant aunts and uncles have heard of her. She has been around now for more years than this magazine has, which is quite a while if you count our previous twenty issues as the Official PlayStation mag.

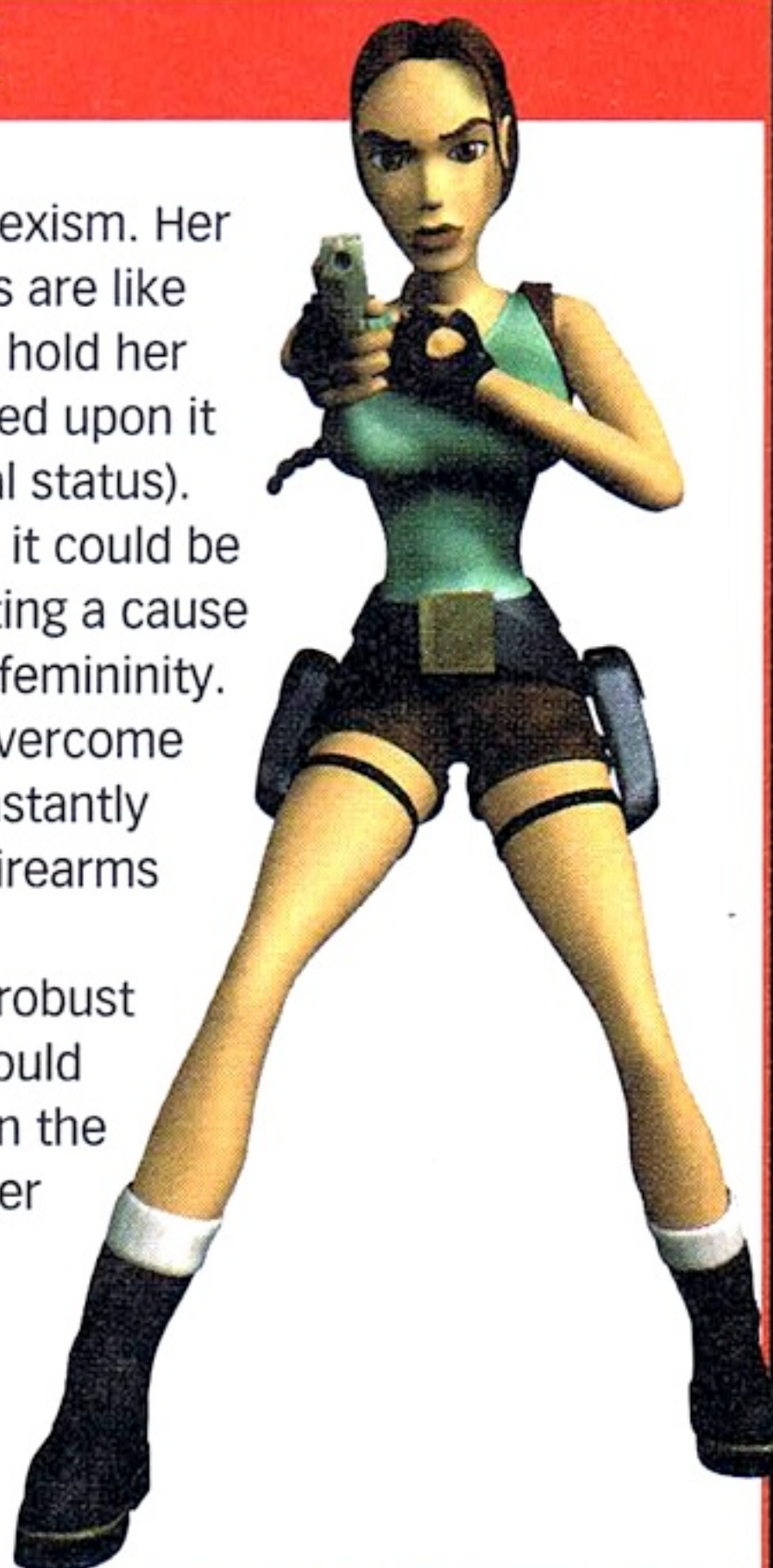
She has startled, entertained and even titillated many people around the globe, from the young males who love her to death to the concerned mothers who disapprove the most. Having surpassed the status of videogame heroine, she has been an unofficial mascot for Sony's PlayStation ever since her birth in the very first Tomb Raider game four years ago.

To look at any of the Tomb Raider games now wouldn't make anyone's eyes bug out, but if we can cast our minds back to the mid 1990s, it is possible to comprehend the fascination the world held for this amply bosomed woman and her exploits. She brought with her unique and fresh concepts in gameplay and the world of 3D adventuring has never been the same. But how did she do it?

THE BIG ISSUE

To many she represents flagrant sexism. Her body speaks of surgery, her limbs are like matchsticks and her waist could not hold her top-heavy torso up if her life depended upon it (which it does not due to her fictional status).

But on the other side of the coin, it could be suggested that she has been promoting a cause for feminism all this time, as well as femininity. Her athletic prowess, her ability to overcome adversaries and problems which constantly block her path and her affinity with firearms all paint her as a truly innovative, resourceful, exuberant, spirited and robust woman. Playing any of her games would eventually have a subliminal effect on the gamer, convincing them that a slender female is perfectly capable of conquering any sort of obstacle and working through any predicament that a man could deal with. But then again, she's very skinny.



TOMB RAIDER 4: THE LAST REVELATION

Adored by fans, reviled by the elite, has Lara met her temple of doom?

As the daughter of Lord Henshingly Croft, Lara was born into and destined to inherit obscene wealth. Her upbringing was pampered, but being the centre of attention all the time meant that she had no concept of what being pampered was.

She graduated from a posh college at the age of 21 and it was assumed that she would soon marry some equally stinking aristocrat. However, things went horribly wrong during the plane trip home from a skiing expedition. The aeroplane crashed deep in the snowy Himalayan mountains, leaving our lovely Lara stranded as the sole survivor of the incident.

For days she trekked through some of the most inhospitable, unyielding virgin wilderness on Earth. She was forced to push herself harder than ever before and she had to think to survive. By the time that she arrived in the little village of Tokakeriby, her life was changed.

She no longer wanted to be safe. Being utterly isolated and depending on only her own wits and fitness to survive made her feel alive like she'd never felt before. She made it her life's ambition to explore remote territories, excusing herself by saying that it was in search of rare artifacts.

All of this background plot and much more is disclosed in full-motion video sequences in *Tomb Raider 4*. At the start of the game you even get to guide a young teenage Lara through her very first tomb, following a famous archaeologist as he shows her around.

At first he seems helpful and caring, but as Lara demonstrates to him her amazing agility and tomb-raiding prowess, he grows more and more arrogant toward her. She finally ticks him off by reaching the heart of the tomb before him and saying, *"In the time it took you to finally arrive, I have translated the scripture on this headstone."*

SAME OLD RELIABLE FORMULA

Tomb Raider 4 plays exactly like the other three, using the same reliable recipe for hours of exploring fun. This one however never leaves Egypt. All of the forty-odd stages of the game are set in the world's oldest desert country. The river Nile, the Valley of Kings, it's all there.

At this late stage in the TR series, Lara has quite an extensive array of tricks and moves. She can walk, run, sprint, jump, shoot, dive, swim, crawl and perform handstands. On top of that, she can look around in any direction while she is doing other things, provided you have a Dual Shock controller in your possession.

The main improvements *Tomb Raider* has made involve the level design. Instead of the old method of forcing the player to run all the way to one end of a level to retrieve a key that opens the door back at the start, the puzzles in TR4 are much more complex and close-knit.

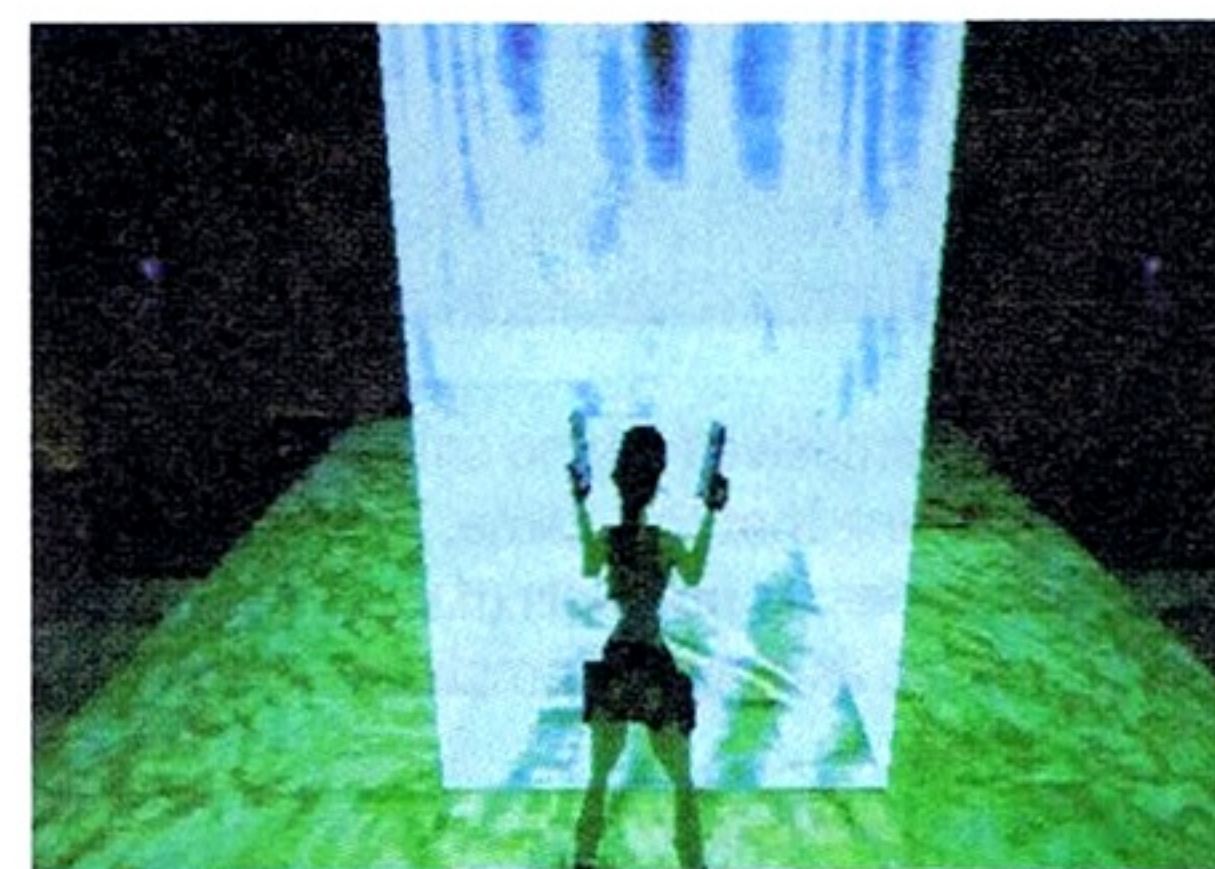
In a way the game reminds us of *Quake* or some such first-person shooter, the way all the levers and switches are positioned so close to each other. It was a wise move in the end, because although everything is more compact,



More detailed and curvaceous than ever before, Lara faces equally realistic Egyptian catacombs



Expansive 3D environments from antiquity



More action, more special effects, more fun?

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
Eidos

■ Developer
Core

■ Genre
3D Platformer

■ Release Date
February 2000

■ Players
One

■ No. of CD's
One

■ Expectations
Those with the
patience will reap
the rewards

ALTERNATIVES

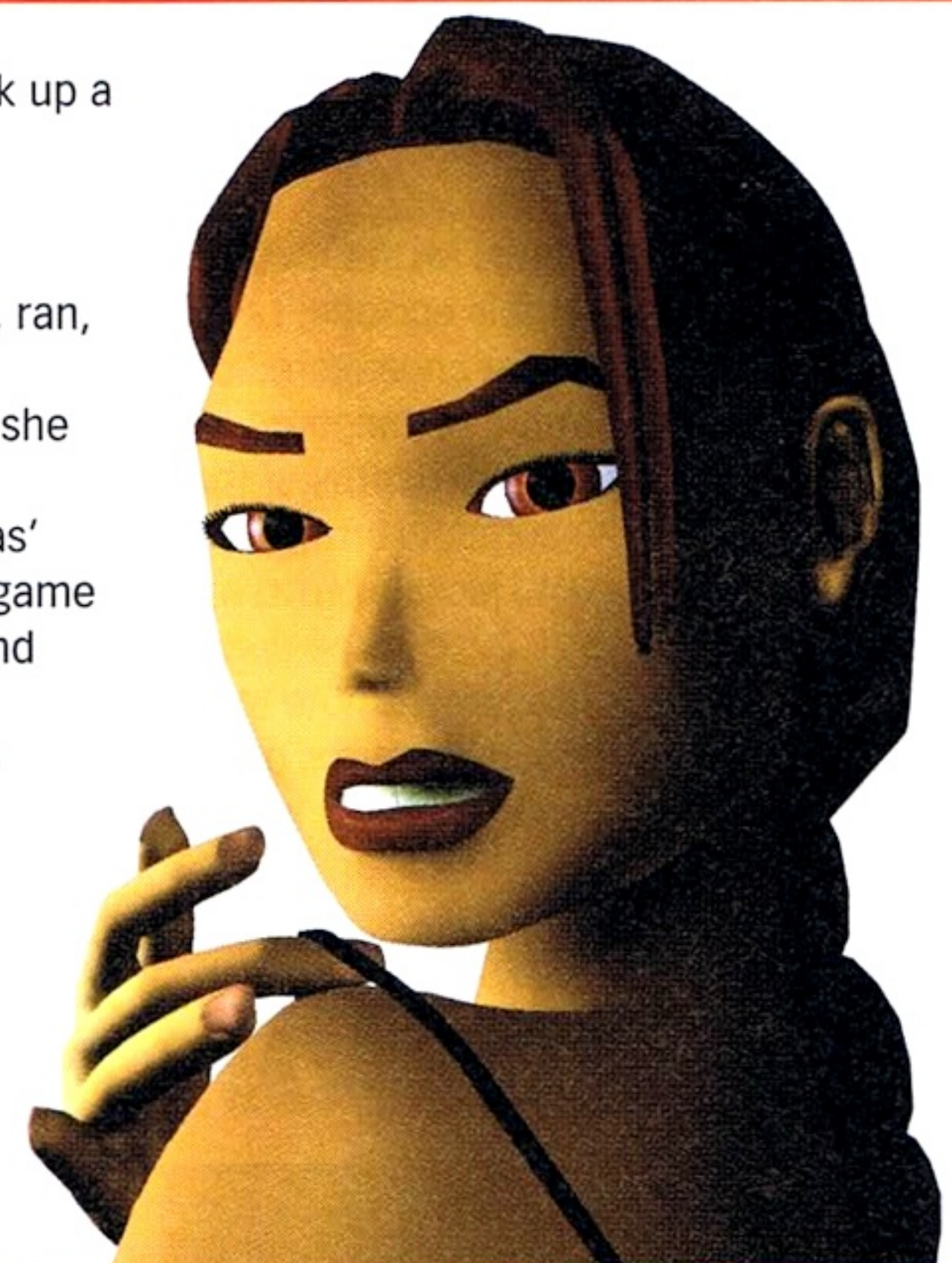
- Tomb Raider 1
- Tomb Raider 2
- Tomb Raider 3
- Syphon Filter
- Soul Reaver
- Fighting Force 2

THE ORIGINAL AND STILL THE BEST

It all started with *Tomb Raider*. Eidos were clever enough to think up a title for their new game which encapsulated the more exotic adventures of an archaeologist (thanks to the prior existence of Indiana Jones) with a dark and ancient theme. Back then, her particular style of game was almost unprecedented. She walked, ran, shot endangered species, climbed and jumped in her own fully-furnished, unnaturally natural universe. Some even thought that she lived and breathed in it.

Visiting strikingly similar locales to those seen in George Lucas' film *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the potential audience for this new game was already familiar with the kind of adventure on offer. Thick and thriving jungles, unpredictable marshes and swampland, natural challenges the likes of which very few of us are actually going to encounter during the normal course of our average lives.

That's the appeal: *Tomb Raider* has always been an open doorway to another world, based on the one in which we live but concentrating on only the most perilous and exciting parts thereof. It was escapism at its best, accentuated (for the young males at least, who then embodied the majority of consumers in the gaming market) by the fact that this woman, in some people's eyes, symbolised female perfection.



GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

SECOND OPINION



KEVIN CHEUNG

In spite of the commercial evils that are associated with sequels, *Tomb Raider 4* is undeniably a great game. Going against it is the fact that even though there are all sorts of minor little tweaks and improvements here and there, it still looks and plays like the TR games we have laboured through before. The question for any gamer, therefore, is whether you're enough of a fan of either Lara or the adventure genre to want to experience more of the same.



No Tomb Riader game would be complete without the requisite lashings of high quality FMV



Lara fails to meet the Islamic dress code...

the stages themselves are no smaller than before, meaning that this game, being roughly the same size as its prequels (if not bigger) will take you twice as long to complete.

GORGEOUS GRAPHICS

As usual, the visual side of Lara's latest outing is just luxuriant. Pushing the old PlayStation as far as it can go, every little effect from the lighting to the textures of the tombs is just perfect. Things are murky and obscure when inside an ancient crypt without the aid of a flare and outside, the brilliance of the sun casts black shadows here and there.

EVEN MORE ENDANGERED SPECIES

In this episode, Lara gets to slaughter even more endangered species, to make them even more endangered. Alligators populate the watery depths of the Nile, small black scorpions buzz at your ankles in the deserts and jackals prove a worry too.

Even in the deepest bowels of the most ancient, remote tombs, Lara is still cautious of deadly swarms of malicious scarab beetles and you just never know when to expect an attack

from the giant scorpions. They're even bigger than Lara!

To help Lara in targeting her new opposition, *Tomb Raider 4* features a laser scope attachment. The aiming device may be fitted to any weapon she has found along the way. Once attached, aiming becomes an entirely different story. You see the world through a red scope with crosshairs and you can zoom in and out to aim with unprecedented precision.

She will also have a few more vehicles to play with, such as army jeeps and a motorbike with a side-carriage. In one exquisite lead-in clip of FMV, Lara storms a desert camp in a roofless truck while its inhabitants fire at her madly with machine guns. One baddie picks up a rocket launcher, but Lara's keen eye detects this danger and she pops a cap in his head before he can put a stop to her rampage.

That's another thing that breathes fresh air into this sequel. The storyline is a bit Indiana-esque in that, throughout the game, there are others who seek the same artifacts that Lara is searching for. The action and tension are kept to a maximum because wherever she goes, bloodthirsty Arabs are on her tail like a dog after a thrown stick.

The FMV is frequent and very good. It really adds to the atmosphere every step of the way. As more and more story is revealed, you get the feeling that Lara is onto something big this time. Oh sure, she deals with big things every day (snicker) but none quite so ominous as the end of the world.

All up, this has got to be the best Tomb Raider yet. The only warning I have to prospective buyers is this: it isn't easy.

Previous TR's have been aimed at a broader market, so that those who had never played Tomb Raider 1 or 2 could pick it up and play. However, this is not the case with *Tomb Raider 4*. This game has been designed to present a challenge to veterans of the series. The puzzles are cryptic and the enemies more deadly than before. If you aren't accustomed to Lara's games, I suggest you try one of the earlier instalments, because *TR4* is the deep end.

Hillous Lesslie



PlayStation

OVERALL: An extremely large and worthy addition to the world's most famous videogame series.

GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Splendid textures pack in the detail - perhaps too much detail?
SOUND:	★★★★★	Unobtrusive music accompanies subtle sounds
GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	If you have the patience required, you will reap the rewards
DIFFICULTY:	★★★★★	Very. This game is directed at Tomb Raider masters
LIFESPAN:	★★★★	It will take you bloody ages to finish, even longer to find everything

94
PERCENT

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007

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Harvey Norman

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 SUPACENTA • CHATSWOOD CHASE • GORDON CENTRE • LIVERPOOL MEGACENTA • MOORE PARK SUPACENTA • PENRITH
 • WILEY PARK **NSW COUNTRY** • ARMIDALE • BATHURST • COFFS HARBOUR • DENILQUIN • DUBBO • ERINA • GRAFTON
 • INVERELL • LISMORE • MAITLAND • MOREE • MUDGE • NEWCASTLE SUPERSTORE • NOWRA • ORANGE • PARKES • PORT MACQUARIE • TAMWORTH • TAREE • WAGGA WAGGA
 • WARRAWONG • YOUNG **ACT** • FYSHWICK • WODEN PLAZA **BRISBANE METRO** • ASPLEY OPEN 7 DAYS • CARINDALE • EVERTON PARK OPENS DECEMBER • MT GRAVATT • OXLEY • GOLD
 COAST OPEN 7 DAYS • NOOSA HEADS OPENS NOVEMBER • TWEED HEADS SOUTH OPEN 7 DAYS **QUEENSLAND COUNTRY** • SUNSHINE COAST OPEN 7 DAYS • BUNDABERG • CAIRNS OPEN
 7 DAYS • GLADSTONE OPEN 7 DAYS • MACKAY • ROCKHAMPTON NORTH • TOOWOOMBA • TOWNSVILLE **MELBOURNE SUPERSTORES** • OPEN 7 DAYS • DANDENONG • GREENSBOROUGH
 PLAZA • MARIBYRNONG • MOORABBIN • NUNAWADING • PRESTON **VICTORIA COUNTRY** • OPEN 7 DAYS • ALBURY • BALLARAT • BENDIGO • GEELONG • MILDURA • SHEPPARTON
 • TRARALGON • WARRNAMBOOL **ADELAIDE - SOUTH AUSTRALIA** • ENFIELD OPENS DECEMBER • MARION OPEN MON-SAT **WESTERN AUSTRALIA** • ALBANY • BUNBURY • BUSSELTON
 • CANNINGTON • GERALDTON • JOONDALUP NOW OPEN • KALGOORLIE • KARRATHA • O'CONNOR NOW OPEN • OSBORNE PARK • PORT HEDLAND • PORT KENNEDY The computer products
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HN20733

READY 2 RUMBLE

Are we finally looking at a decent boxing game for the PlayStation?

FACT FILE

- Publisher
Playcorp
- Developer
Midway
- Genre
Boxing
- Release Date
Out Now
- Players
One or two
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
Boxing, but with Midway's arcade style and flair

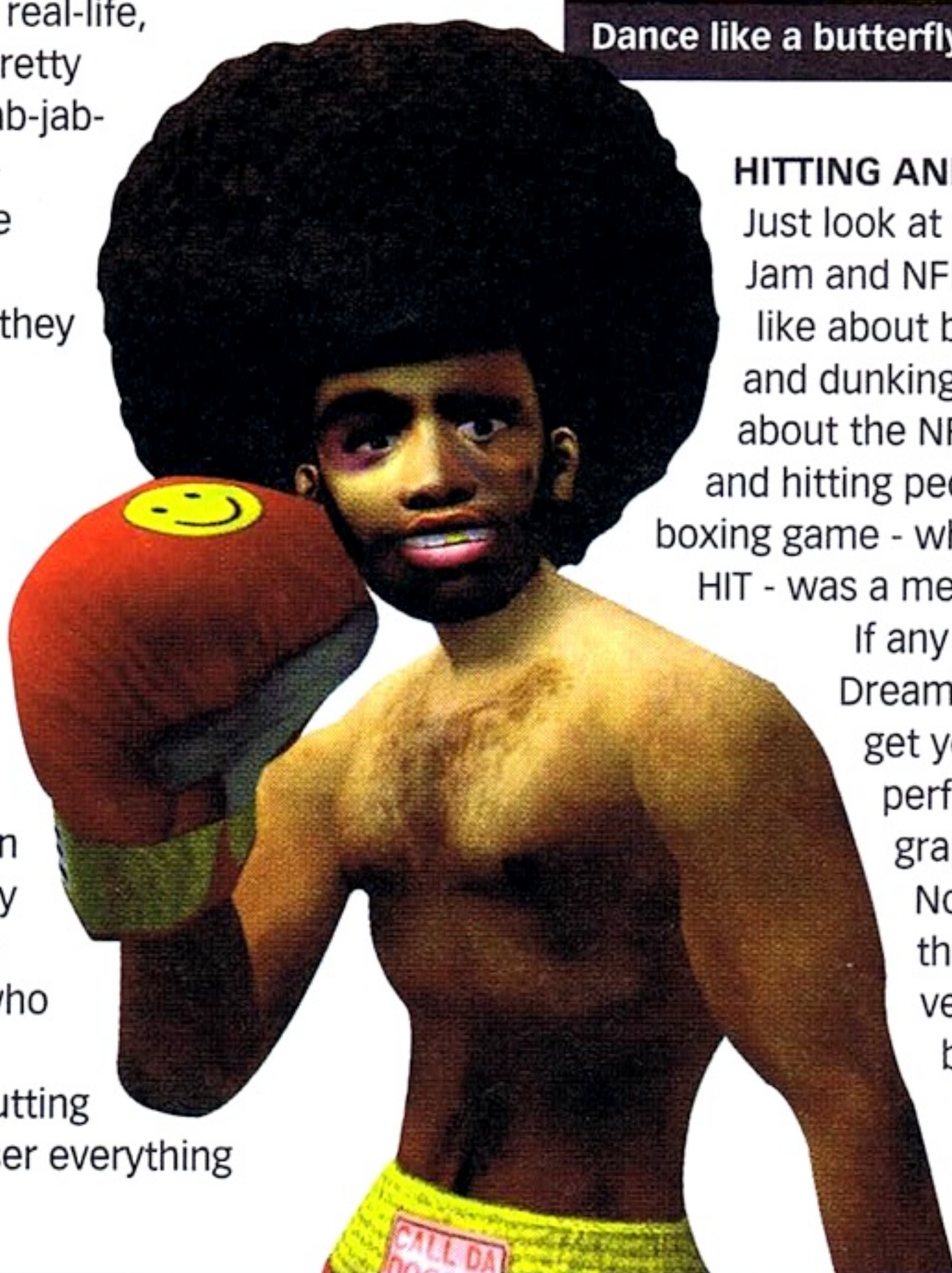
ALTERNATIVES

- Victory Boxing
- Victory Boxing 2
- K.O. Kings
- K.O. Kings 2000

Remember the NES classic boxing game, *Punch Out*? Consoles haven't seen a boxing game quite like it, ever. Sure, there have been plenty of fighting games hit the home entertainment systems since then, but they've almost all been martial arts based fighting games, not boxing games.

EA Sports tried hard and delivered an in-depth boxing simulator in *Knockout Kings* (and the soon to be released *Knockout Kings 2000*), but the main problem with that game is that it was a simulator. In real-life, boxing is actually pretty boring. It's all jab-jab-jab-fake punch-jab-jab-punch. Most people don't want to sit through the grabs, they want the king hits!

Which is where *Ready 2 Rumble*, Midway's foray into the world of boxing comes into the picture. All of you fans of arcade sporting action should get on your knees and pray daily to the gaming gurus at Midway, who have a knack for grabbing a sport, gutting it, and giving the user everything they want.



HITTING AND DUNKING

Just look at their past titles like *NBA Jam* and *NFL Blitz*. What do people like about basketball? Hitting people and dunking. What do people like about the NFL? Scoring touchdowns and hitting people. In hindsight, a boxing game - where all you need to do is HIT - was a mere formality for Midway.

If any of you have seen the Dreamcast version of *R2R*, don't get your hopes up for a near-perfect conversion of the graphics on the PlayStation.

No, the graphics aren't in the same league as the DC version, but they're not too bad. Each boxer has a nice level of detail, and the loss of smoothness and texturing on each



fighter, while noticeable, doesn't take away from the main aspect of *R2R*, and that's the personality that the game possesses.

Speaking of personality, each fighter in *R2R* is overflowing with it. As your boxer is announced, he'll bob up and down, shaking his fists and snapping his neck, just like you see

BOXERS



SELENE STRIKE

HOME: Brasilia, Brazil
WEIGHT: 130 lbs
HEIGHT: 6'2"
REACH: 80"
AGE: 24



NAT DADDY

HOME: Las Vegas, Nevada
WEIGHT: 225 lbs
HEIGHT: 6'9"
REACH: 100"
AGE: 25



TANK THRASHER

HOME: Guntersville, Alabama
WEIGHT: 270 lbs
HEIGHT: 6'4"
REACH: 80"
AGE: 31



"BIG" WILLIE JOHNSON

HOME: Chester, England
WEIGHT: 175 lbs
HEIGHT: 6'1"
REACH: 72"
AGE: 38



BRUCE BLADE

HOME: San Diego, California
WEIGHT: 243 lbs
HEIGHT: 6'5"
REACH: 78"
AGE: 25



BORIS "THE BEAR" KNOKIMOV

HOME: Zadar, Croatia
WEIGHT: 220 lbs
HEIGHT: 6'3"
REACH: 73"
AGE: 30



SALUA

HOME: Waipahu, Oahu
WEIGHT: 358 lbs
HEIGHT: 6'0"
REACH: 77"
AGE: 33



KEMO CLAW

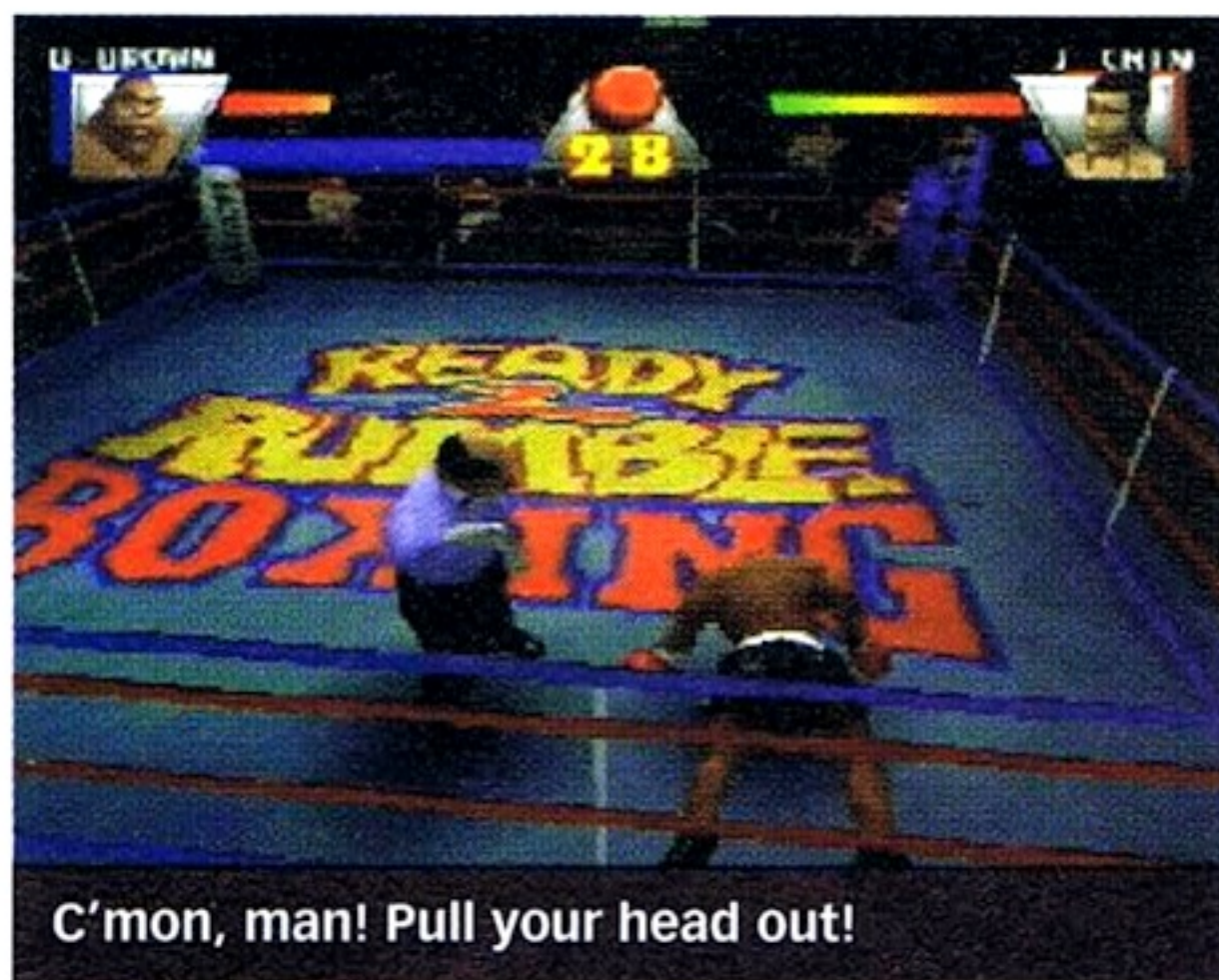
HOME: Gallup, New Mexico
WEIGHT: 105 lbs
HEIGHT: 7'1"
REACH: 99"
AGE: 34



BUTCHER BROWN

HOME: District of Columbia
WEIGHT: 232 lbs
HEIGHT: 5'9"
REACH: 82"
AGE: 26





C'mon, man! Pull your head out!

those big bastards like Tyson do before their bouts. Then they'll start throwing trash-talk-taunts around, just like the real meatheads. Except the guys in *R2R*, thankfully, are videogame parodies, unlike guys like Mike Tyson, who are just farces.

BUTTON-MASHING

When you finally get to start throwing punches is when you realise this game is from Midway. Fans of fighting games such as *Tekken* or *Street Fighter* who are looking to use strings of combos should stay well away from this game. Simply button-mashing 'til your heart's content will find you winning most bouts.

Of course, as you get further into the game you'll find you might need to play up to your own character's strengths and your opponent's weaknesses, but basically it's hammer the punch buttons and you'll be right. Which is why *R2R* is an excellent two-player game. Button-mashing against a human competitor is a no-no. Unless you're a cheat like Hillous.



Spot the difference: a screenshot from the Dreamcast version of Ready 2 Rumble

MIDWAY RUMBLE

Another characteristic that stamps this game with a label marked "Property of Midway" is the "Rumble" feature that occurs during each fight. Like the "On Fire" modes in *NBA Jam* and *NFL Blitz*, if you land six clean punches during the round, you'll spell out the word "Rumble" and find your boxing gloves now glow white. Which means punch the crap out of your opponent now!

Is *Ready 2 Rumble* another sporting arcade action winner from Midway? Yes. Does it have the bits that make boxing fans drool? Of course not. Does it have intense arcade boxing fun where all you need to worry about is smacking your opponent upside the head. Yes. Which is what makes *Ready 2 Rumble* a great buy... especially if you've got a friend to beat up on.

Ewan Corness

GAME FEATURES

Memory Card

Dual Shock Compatible

SECOND OPINION



HILLOUS LESSLIE

It's good to have a good boxing game at last to detract from the endless line of mindless fighting games: one with a decent amount of strategy to play with while at the same time not being too dull and realistic like the *KO Kings* series.

BOXERS



"FURIOUS" FAZ MOTAR
HOME: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
WEIGHT: 230 lbs
HEIGHT: 6'2"
REACH: 76"
AGE: 28



JIMMY BLOOD
HOME: Oamaru, New Zealand
WEIGHT: 226 lbs
HEIGHT: 6'0"
REACH: 87"
AGE: 23



AFRO THUNDER
HOME: New York, New York
WEIGHT: 120 lbs
HEIGHT: 5'7"
REACH: 70"
AGE: 27



ROCKET SAMCHAY
HOME: Bangkok, Thailand
WEIGHT: 165 lbs
HEIGHT: 5'7"
REACH: 71"
AGE: 23



ANGEL "RAGING" RIVERA
HOME: Monterrey, Mexico
WEIGHT: 155 lbs
HEIGHT: 5'9"
REACH: 71"
AGE: 23



LULU VALENTINE
HOME: Seattle, Washington
WEIGHT: 105 lbs
HEIGHT: 5'2"
REACH: 64"
AGE: 24



JET "IRON" CHIN
HOME: Kaohsiung, Taiwan
WEIGHT: 150 lbs
HEIGHT: 5'8"
REACH: 78"
AGE: 29



PlayStation

OVERALL: Finally someone's taken boxing and provided PlayStation owners with a mindless arcade experience.

GRAPHICS:	★★★	They do the job, nothing mind-blowing
SOUND:	★★★★	The punching effects and taunts are excellent
GAMEPLAY:	★★★	It's Midway, so it's not deep, just very playable
DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Easy to get into, hard to master (love the cliches)
LIFESPAN:	★★★	Enough unlockable characters to keep you interested

83
PERCENT

EHRGEIZ

Square equals innovation. Expect no less from their latest fighting title

FACT FILE

- Publisher
Sony
- Developer
Squaresoft
- Genre
Fighting
- Release Date
TBA
- Players
One or two
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
Ehrgeiz is basically
Tobal 2 but with a
bit of Tekken
flavour. Highly
original, but a bit
too complicated

ALTERNATIVES

- Tobal No. 1
- Bushido Blade
- Dead or Alive
- Tekken 3



Completely free 3D movement in multilayered battle arenas with an incredibly diverse range of complex fighting styles

The marketing slogan for Ehrgeiz is a classic example of how funny Japan's perception of the English language can be. "God bless the ring", the catch-cry of Squaresoft's latest offering on the

PlayStation, will hopefully be remembered fondly by gaming enthusiasts not as a source of condescending amusement, but rather as a mark of quality and forward-thinking in terms of videogame design and production.

MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

The history behind Ehrgeiz is quite interesting. In spite of the fact that Squaresoft is better known throughout the gaming world for its killer RPGs, it is also the producer of one of the greatest fighting games ever made: Tobal 2. The tragedy is that the game was never released outside of Japan, so the potential of Square's Dream Factory development team was never recognised nor realised.



One moment she's a regular girl...



...and then she's a rapacious wildcat

On the other hand, you have Namco, creator of arguably the most popular 3D fighting game series, Tekken. In 1997, Squaresoft and Namco combined their efforts to produce a revolutionary fighting game that combined the finest elements of both Tobal 2 and Tekken 3 - the end result being what we have before us, Ehrgeiz.

IT'S PRONOUNCED "AIR-GUY-TS"

The story behind Ehrgeiz is of little consequence. All you really need to know is that you select a character and battle your way through to the end of the game, just as we've

always been doing since the days of Street Fighter. However, Ehrgeiz has several distinguishing features that set it apart from the rest of the crowd.

Firstly, the game offers true 3D motion. That is, you can move your character freely on the z-axis at will. This is as opposed to games like Tekken 3, which put you on a 2D plane and allowed you perform a menial perspective shift. This is a feature that has not been seen in the west since Tobal No. 1, which offered a similar style of movement. Ehrgeiz goes a step further by disabling character tracking. That's what makes the opponents face each other.



VALUE-ADDED BONUS GAMES



Like all of the best fighting games in the market, *Ehrgeiz* offers several different modes of play, including an RPG mode not unlike the one in the original *Tobal No. 1*. That is, you can buy items in the town, gain experience, travel down into dungeons and defeat the bosses residing within. There are also a couple of puzzle modes and sports modes, all of which are made possible through the control interface which resembles a platform game in many respects.



Sephiroth of Final Fantasy fame and a ninja



Objects can be used against your enemy, either by hiding behind them or throwing at opponents



A typical battle arena: an enclosed ring



The Airship is one of the better stages

The point behind this is that you're not actually standing in a "ring" per se, but rather you can jump up and down on platforms and roof tops, pick up objects and throw them at each other, and so on. It's actually a lot like the early demos we've seen of *The Bouncer* on the PlayStation 2. Rather than impede all the action with cumbersome character tracking, you can run about freely in any direction you want.

That brings us to the level designs, which go beyond the traditional "fight in the ring" mould. Some levels have you fighting on the rooftop of a skyscraper, jumping up and down water tanks and hanging off ladders; while another level might have you fighting in Chinatown, or on top of a train moving at high speed.

LISTEN TO CLOUD FOR THE FIRST TIME!

Aesthetically, *Ehrgeiz* is a stunning game to see and hear. With a slightly lower polygon count, the game is remarkably faithful to its arcade counterpart. The characters all look awesomely powerful as they fly about the screen, pounding their fists into each other, and firing off their projectile weapons with dazzling technicolour splendour. The dynamic three-dimensional

movement, coupled with the roving cameras, makes it a strikingly different visual experience to the usual *Tekken* fare we're used to.

What's better is the fact that Squaresoft have gone to the trouble of providing several extra unlockable characters, all of whom come from *Final Fantasy VII*. That's right - you get to see Cloud, Sephiroth, Tifa, and Vincent duke it out with each other. The novelty value, of course, is not only to we get to see some major sword-swinging action, but it will also be the first time we actually get to hear their voices!

ULTIMATE TEST OF DEXTERITY

The unfortunate irony is that the number of innovations Square and Namco have tried to cram into this game may very well be its own undoing. Just imagine, for a moment, how you would lay out the buttons for such a game with this kind of 3D interaction, coupled together with blocking, countering, reversals, projectile weapons, grappling, wrestling, throwing, crouching, and jumping.

It's pretty complex just thinking about it, and the control interface that Square have offered is no less complicated. Using a High

and Low attack, you move around with the analogue thumb-stick and press down on it to perform certain crouching and special moves.

The shoulder buttons are used for jumping and blocking, and an attack combined with a block is how you perform your basic throw. Another button is assigned to your secondary and tertiary weapons, such as producing Cloud's sword or throwing grenades. Needless to say, this kind of interface is pretty complicated, and takes quite a bit of getting used to.

Hopefully, the dedicated gamers out there will appreciate the fact that *Ehrgeiz* is a complex game, the original design of which was well ahead of its time. It's understandable that with modern day control pad designs, it should be a little complicated to play.

Nevertheless, the game deserves a huge amount of credit for breaking away from the accepted mould of fighting games and trying to inject something completely new into the genre. If you are a truly forward-thinking connoisseur of videogames, then *Ehrgeiz* must be checked out. If thinking is too hard for you, stick with *Tekken*.

Kevin Cheung

GAME FEATURES

Memory Card

Dual Shock Compatible



PlayStation

■ **OVERALL:** Finally, a fighting game with more brains than brawn. *Ehrgeiz* is the first step into the future of fighting games.

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Excellent reproduction of the arcade's detailed and fluid motion
■ SOUND:	★★★	Vibrant tunes & high quality sound samples; nothing ground-breaking
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★★★	An impressive new approach to a complex genre
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Evenly balanced difficulty level, excellent fun with friends
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★	Unlockable characters, alternative game modes keeps you hooked

92

PERCENT

CRASH TEAM RACING

Never before has a car Crash been so much fun

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
Sony
- **Developer**
Naughty Dog
- **Genre**
Racing
- **Release Date**
Out now
- **Players**
One to Four
- **No. of CD's**
One
- **Expectations**
Buyers will be extremely satisfied with the product they paid for

ALTERNATIVES

- Speed Freaks
- S.C.A.R.S.
- Chocobo Racing

One of the blessings that go with the unofficial tag is that we can tell the truth about blatant reproductions like this. *Crash Team Racing* is the most impeccable Mario Kart 64 clone ever made, right down to the crash animations and hop buttons.

There are differences, like the characters' names and the inclusion of an Adventure mode, but otherwise *Crash Team Racing* was genetically modeled on Mario's DNA.

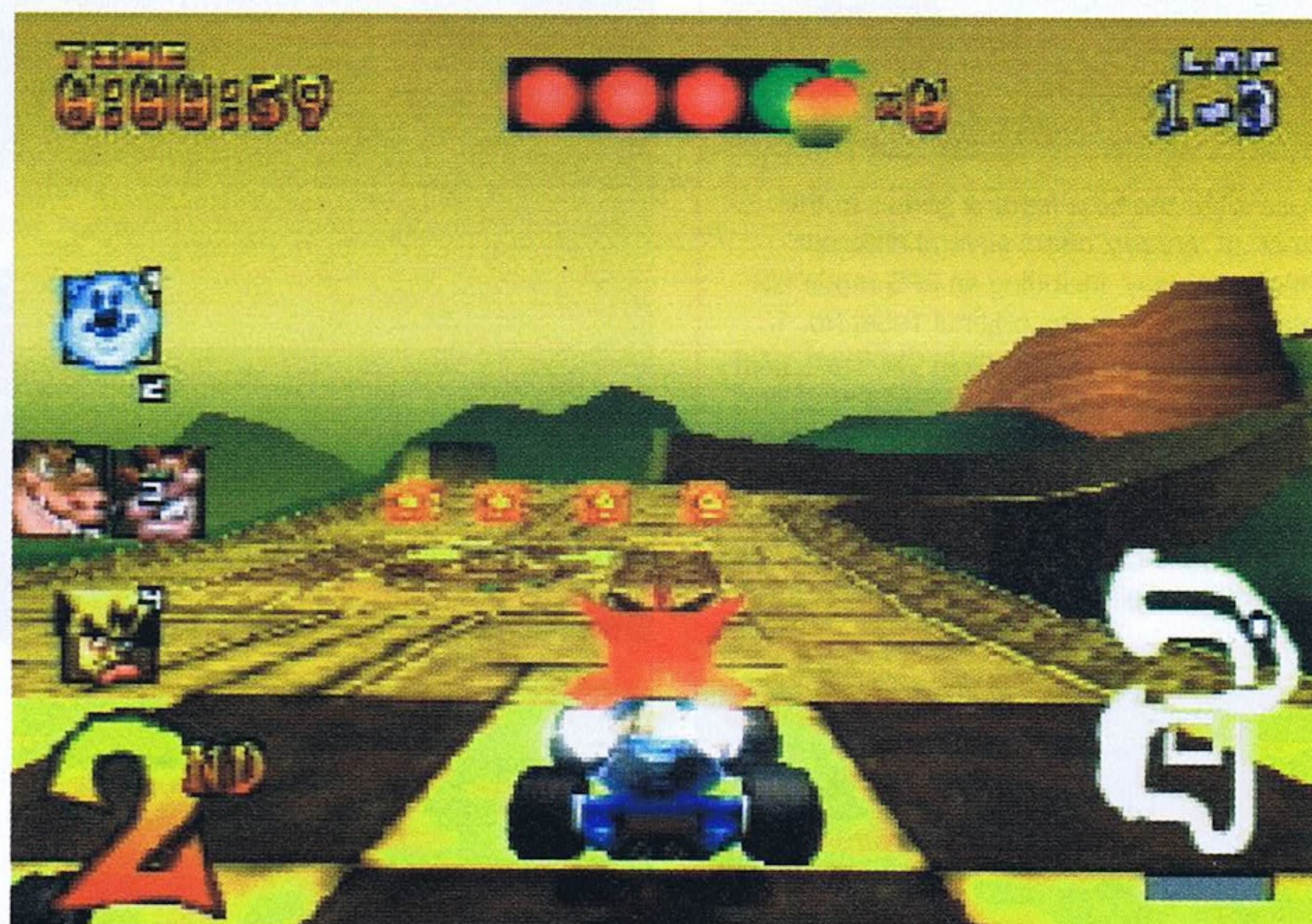
The whistle could also be blown on *Speed Freaks*, but it at least tried to differ, in some small ways, to Nintendo's age-old karting king. With *Crash Team Racing*, the semblances are so striking that they leave no doubt that the copying was intentional.

From the layout and scenery of each course to the character design, everything is identical to *Mario Kart 64*. The weapons are the same and there's even a nifty little powerslide you can do to give you a burst of speed. Uncanny.

TRIED AND TRUE

Although it is a direct imitation of another game, thankfully it is a replica of one of Nintendo's, and the world's, finest racers. This could be seen as Naughty Dog and Sony doing PlayStation owners a favour. Until now, the only PSX racers to support four players were V-Rally 2, Rally Cross and the slightly less boring SCARS.

For those of you who have never played Mario Kart, it is a cute racer with weapons and a Battle mode. CTR is the same.



You can get a burst of speed at the start of the race by holding X just before the green light

You can choose to enter a tournament to win a cup and unlock more tracks, with or without a friend, or you can practice in the Time Trials. The Adventure mode is just a gimmick thrown in to make the whole racing theme seem more exciting; a cool and interesting way to unlock the game.

When selecting your character, there are eight little critters available. As in Mario Kart, they split into four neat pairs for each skill level. Crash is one of the Mr. Average racers, Pura Tiger is a slow and sharp-turning beginner character, whereas Dingodile is a big bloke for experts, being slow to accelerate and heavy to steer but very quick when he gets going.

TAKE IT TO THE RING

Battle mode is fantastic. With up to four players in an arena, you zoom around grabbing weapons as fast as you can discharge them and hilarity prevails. Impounding all the thrills and explosions in a single small course results in a furious fireworks display.

This is the mode you will be coming back for long after you've clocked the game. All of the characters have got a list of things to say when they get hit, win, fall off a precipice or whatever, so you can imagine the

confusion in the heat of a choking four player battle.

The graphics in this game are stunning. From the framerate to the texture designs, everything is smooth and flawless. Primary colours dominate every



Burning around the bend in a powerslide

race and it is always clear what is going on. Everything on the roadside is bright and cartoonish, with flowers and other non-threatening entities all over the place. There are asphalt, dirt, snow and mud tracks as well as themed courses which run through volcanic mountains or bad guys' laboratories.

Each circuit has plenty to look at, shortcuts to discover and obstacles to avoid. Some of them have confounding designs that fold across and twist through themselves, giving you the impression that you're in the middle of a huge bowl of spaghetti. Every effort has been made to prevent these tracks from being in the least way dull or drab.

To make the races even more addictive, there are loads of cool weapons to collect. Familiar wooden boxes litter the racecourses which yield an item when broken. All of these items have been created using Mario Kart's weapons as templates; they just have different names and symbols.

Rockets will hit the nearest racer in front of you, black bombs shoot straight ahead, beakers and TNT boxes can be dropped on the





GAME FEATURES

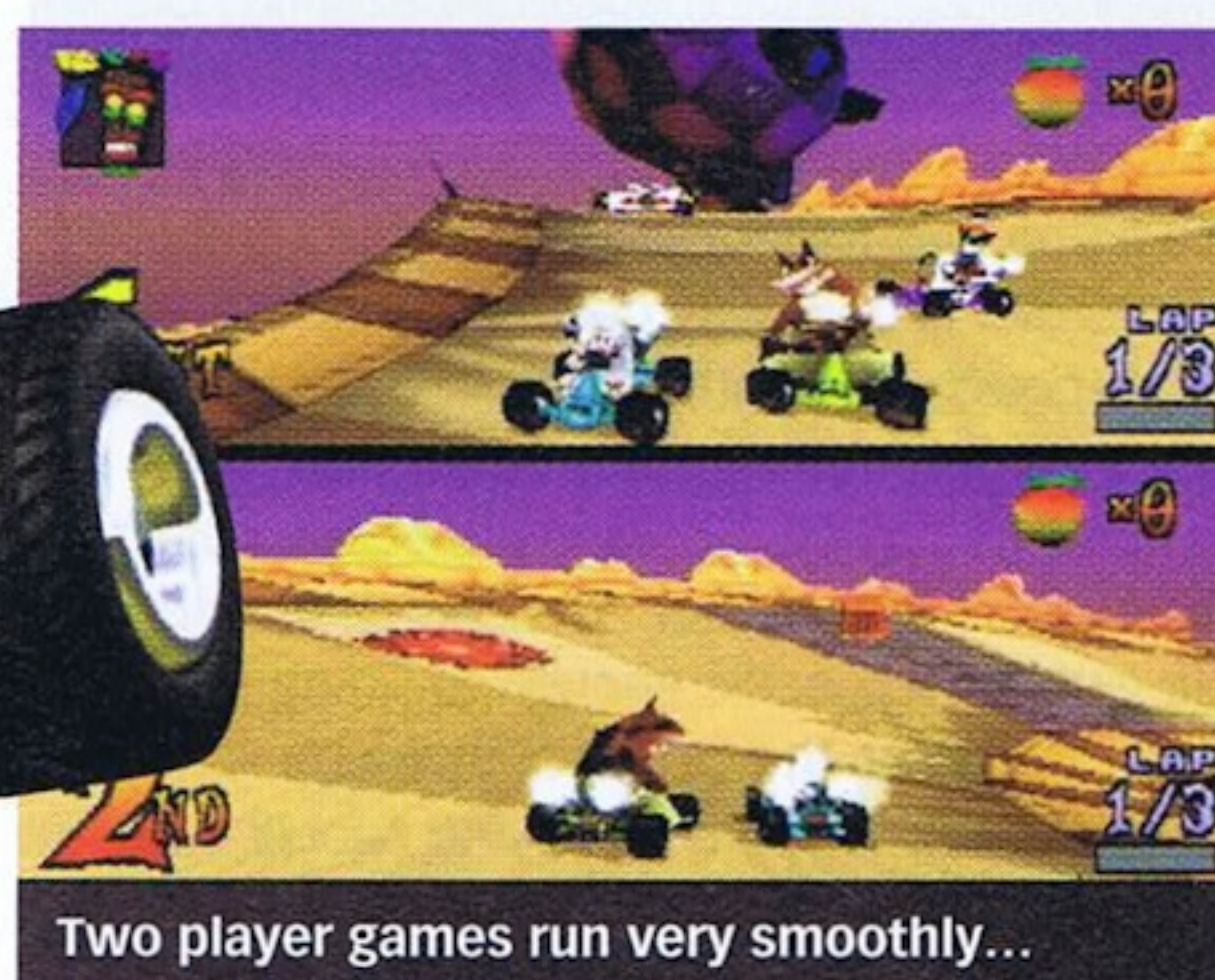
- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

SECOND OPINION



JAMES COTTEE

When you build up a stable of lovable cartoon characters for your award-winning trilogy of gaming landmarks, there comes a time when their conflict of interest in the public eye reaches critical mass, and the need for a plot and cut scenes to establish their motivations is no longer necessary. At this point you can band them together in any old scenario, and expect the formula to work. Which here it does anyway. Stacks of stacks, and it is stacks of fun.



track behind you and Rocket Fuel will give the user a temporary burst of excessive speed. The best one of the lot is the electricity ball which tears off around the track after the person coming first, zapping everyone along the way and opening up a path for the person who deploys it.

POWERSLIDE TO VICTORY

The best part of the game involves powerslides and the speed bursts that you can get by performing them well. L1 and R1 act as hop buttons and they also engage the sideways sliding action if you hop into a corner. While sliding, your exhaust smoke changes for a brief moment from white to black. It is during this moment you must hit the other hop button.

Doing so at the precise instant will give you a small boost and cause your exhaust to once again go black a moment later, whereby you can get another boost. You can get up to three such turbo charges in a single slide. Leaving a gap in between boosts will give you bigger bursts of speed than if you execute all three in quick succession.

One original thing it has is the big air boost. Whenever you launch off a ramp, you get a burst of speed when you hit the ground. The boost is relative to the air time you enjoyed, so the bigger the jump, the faster the boost.

There are many little things in *Crash Team Racing* which add to the overall experience and make the game more fun. You get to see miniature movies of each track at the stage

selection screen instead of just stills, and at the end of each multiplayer battle or race, each player gets an award statement of some kind according to how they fared.

A GREAT RACE

Despite the fact that almost nothing in *Crash Team Racing* was not derived from Nintendo, it is still a bloody good game. Although the four player games don't swim as smoothly as single or two player races, they still play well enough to be thoroughly enjoyable. If you haven't got *Speed Freaks* yet, you'd be smart to buy *Crash Team Racing* first to get your money's worth. *Speed Freaks* may be good, but it isn't excellent. *Crash Team Racing* is excellent.

Hillous Lesslie

PlayStation

OVERALL: A direct rip-off of Mario Kart, CTR is nonetheless absolutely brilliant and great for all ages

GRAPHICS:	★★★★★	Not realistic, just lovely, vibrant, clear and colourful
SOUND:	★★★★	Typical boppy Crash tunes with joyful and inoffensive sounds
GAMEPLAY:	★★★★★	Easy to pick up, then it grows and grows the more you play
DIFFICULTY:	★★★	There are some real challenges in the Adventure mode
LIFESPAN:	★★★★★	No doubt - you'll be playing for years

98
PERCENT

NO FEAR DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING

In this game, the wind is like a brick wall and your bicycle, a bullet

FACT FILE

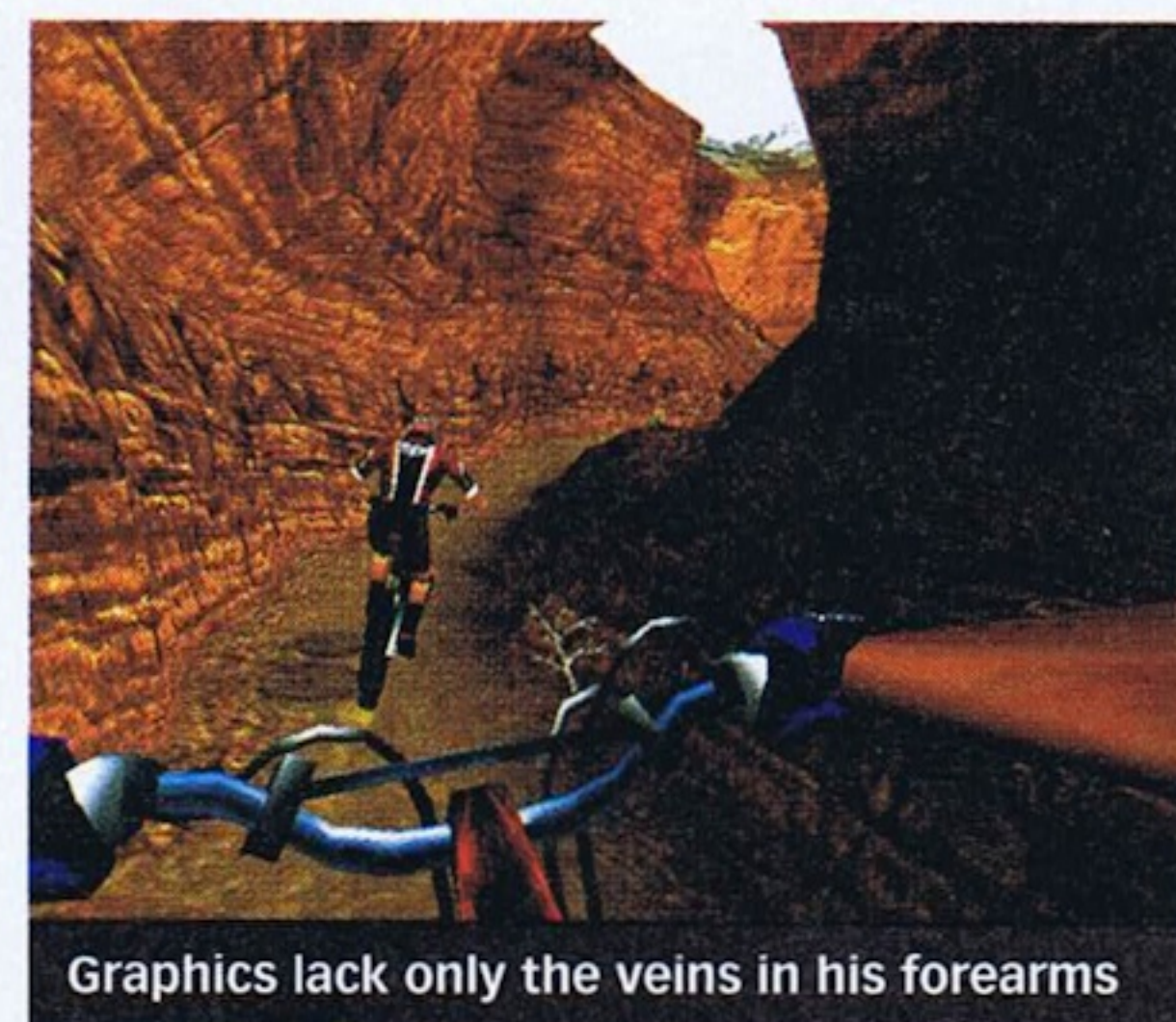
- Publisher
Ozisoft
- Developer
Codemasters
- Genre
Racing
- Release Date
November
- Players
One to four
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
May receive only a lukewarm welcome simply because it is a fresh idea

ALTERNATIVES

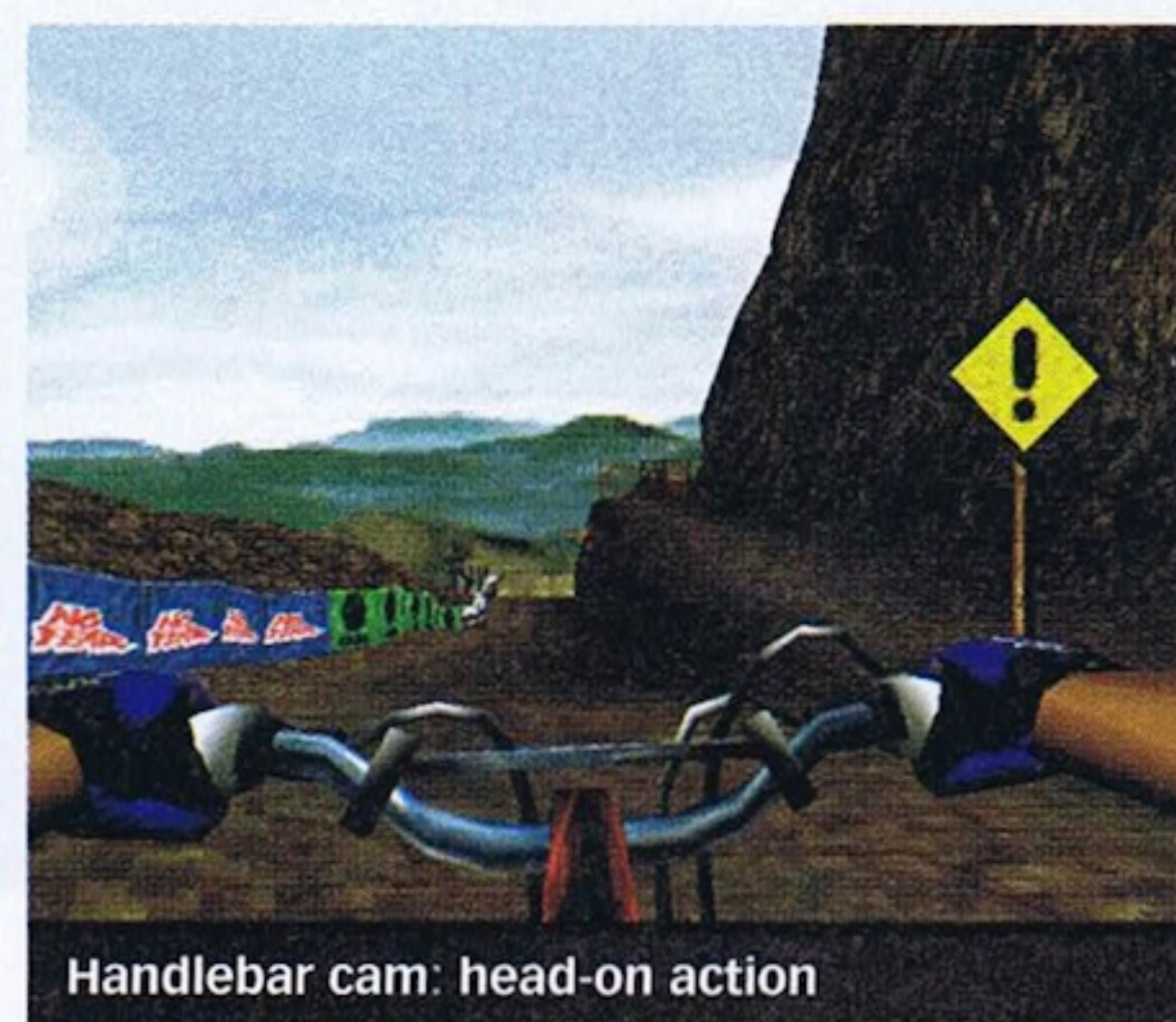
- Courier Crisis
- Moto Racer 2
- Extreme Games



The HUD is clear and simple, leaving most of the screen free so you can see where you're going



Graphics lack only the veins in his forearms



Handlebar cam: head-on action

No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking comes to us from Codemasters, the makers of other racing greats such as Micro Machines V3 and Colin McRae Rally. Naturally intrepid in the game of games, it is not surprising that they have jumped into the deep end by being the first team to attempt a true mtb simulator. For the most part, they have succeeded.

The sport we speak of is, in a word, hairy. Like driving, it involves similar speeds to those gained in a car, but without the protective chassis around you. Like skiing, it involves getting to the bottom of a mountain as quickly as possible, but without the soft snow to land on. It is one of the world's most deadly modern hobbies and only the very daft would even think of doing it for real.

DOWNHILL TERROR TRIP

As an avid pushie m'self, I'm partial to the odd downhill terror trip on my deadly treadly. The game was automatically handed to me for review, without question, as my infatuation with my Giant is well known in the office. In a weekend

the game was fully unlocked by yours truly and the verdict is definitely positive.

Although there are one or two little niggles in the game's coding that detract from the essence of cycling, Codemasters have nailed all the aspects that matter. The overall physics of the game are specific enough to riding a bike to place this game in a genre of its own, somewhere between racing and sports. And there is a genuine sensation of speed, which is crucial for this type of game.

The little things which annoy are the brake physics and the terrain of each course. Applying either brake, front or rear, will start to decrease your speed. However, even on solid surfaces like tarmac, it takes far too long to come to a halt. As for the terrain, it is all too smooth. There are plenty of weeds, plants and branches strewn across your path, but all they do is slow you down when you plough through them. It would have been nice to have to avoid or jump over some large rocks.

As it is though, there are many things to look out for and keep your brain occupied while your body keeps dishing out the endorphins, half expecting you to have a big stack at any moment. There is a jump

button too, which is put to good use frequently when you must launch yourself over creeks and other small impediments.

The race itself consists of you and one other rider. In the Amateur Championship you have no choice of parts and a fairly short track to race. The Championship tournaments are held in three heats. You must win all of them to pass on to the next race.

BETTER BIKE BITS

Completion of any given heat in a Championship will usually grant you an extra part for your bike and/or open up a new section of track in one of the courses. The new sections are raced in the Pro and Elite levels of play. That way, when you enter the next difficulty level, half of the course is still new to you, ensuring more hard-earned victories.

The dynamics of the bike are pretty good. If you wish to turn a sharp corner at high speed, the procedure

0 1:55.79



The tricks are difficult and they more often than not result in an accident not unlike this one



requires you to lean into the corner before applying the rear brakes, causing your back wheel to skid out. You can also choose to lean forward or back, affecting your descent in different ways.

The energy meter in the corner of the screen is a brilliant concept. By monitoring your rider's exhaustion level,

you can only pedal for a certain duration before getting puffed out. The more tired you are, the less power you have to keep you going.

The key to success is coasting down the smooth descents and pedalling only when necessary, uphill or through mud. Your energy replenishes at a constant rate whenever you are not pedalling. You can tell when you need a rest because your rider's movements become very heavy and laboured when the energy meter starts flashing red.

Racing through the Amateur Championships, you don't really notice the overall speed of the game. However, once you get into the Pro and Elite racing tournaments you really start to fly.

As your bike's components improve after winning a few races and earning yourself some fancy parts, your top speed picks up noticeably. The game thus provides a constant challenge, for even when you know the new sections of track like the back of your hand, you are always coming to grips with your bike's ever-increasing potential.



Big air will help you to get in front

It would have been more fulfilling to buy the parts you wanted from a virtual shop rather than be given a set item every couple of races. However, there is still a measure of strategy in selecting the type of brakes/frame/front suspension after you have unlocked some alternatives. Dirt tyres for gravel and wet terrain, slicks for tarmac, spikes for icy conditions, etc.

The downhill courses on offer are fairly satisfying, from misty villages to muddy countryside to dry desert mountains. The scenery is not ugly and the framerate remains above average even when both riders are on screen. Much of the passing flora appears to repeat itself, but there are frequent landmarks which distinguish each track.

The courses are open to a bit of creative pathfinding too. Heading off into the thick bush beside some of the tracks slows you down, but it can sometimes reveal a hidden shortcut. In the hilly sections, huge areas of mud can be flown over if you launch yourself at the right angle and sufficient speed. Here and there you will notice ramps and off-roads that appear to



Cruise down the hills, pedal up them

lead nowhere, whereas in fact they can be your key to winning Gold in the Elite tournament.

RACE A MATE

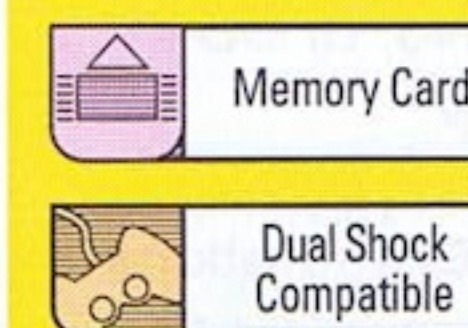
After you have unlocked the whole game, the two player mode is still enjoyable, as is the Trick mode. In Trick mode you tear down a custom-designed hill littered with large ramps and attempt to successfully pull off as many stunts as possible.

If done correctly, the camera will swing in front of you as you perform a trick. However, the trick does not complete itself; you must pull your bike back into line before landing, or eat gravel. The longer you hold the stunt, the more points you are awarded.

For a first, this game is excellent. Had the particular market of PlayStation mountain bike games been flooded already, I wouldn't be so kind, but *NFDMB* has everything a good game needs. Of note are the sounds which unlike in any driving game are quiet, subtle and relaxing. If you're into bikes or you just wish to taste a new breed of racing game, go and try it out.

Hillous Lesslie

GAME FEATURES



SECOND OPINION



KEVIN CHEUNG

Not that this type of sport appeals to my tastes in particular, but I really like the way Codemasters have dealt with this game to distance it from your regular car racing games. It is almost in a genre all by itself. The handling of the bicycles is rather different to that of a large heavy vehicle and it comes across quite nicely. Needs a great deal of practise though.

PlayStation

OVERALL: A terrific attempt at a new genre which comes much closer than any other in the market

GRAPHICS:	★★★	Nothing too special, but not at all bad. Detailed bikes and riders
SOUND:	★★★★★	The soft sounds of the bikes don't drown out the noises of nature
GAMEPLAY:	★★★★★	The nuances of the bike's handling grow on you
DIFFICULTY:	★★★★★	The learning curve is slight, up until the Elite Championship
LIFESPAN:	★★★	You'll rarely play it alone after you finish it

86
PERCENT

NHL FACE OFF 2000

989 Studios prepare to face off with the king of sports, EA

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
Sony
- **Developer**
989 Sports
- **Genre**
Ice Hockey
- **Release Date**
TBA
- **Players**
One to eight
- **No. of CD's**
One
- **Expectations**
A copy of the EA-style, done as only 989 Sports can do it

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible
- Multi Tap Adaptable 1-8 Players

Call me cynical, but I've never really been a big fan of anything 989 Sports have released. Almost everything they've done has reeked of an EA Sports rip-off, so when I saw *NHL Face Off 2000* in my "Reviews To Do" tray, I thought I'd just be doing the standard 989 Sports review - not as good as the EA game in any way, shape or form.

Boy, was I wrong there. *NHL Face Off 2000*, the latest ice hockey game from 989 Sports is one of the best sporting games you will play on your PlayStation this year. It's still not quite good enough to better EA Sports' excellent *NHL 2000*, but they are so alike it's scary.

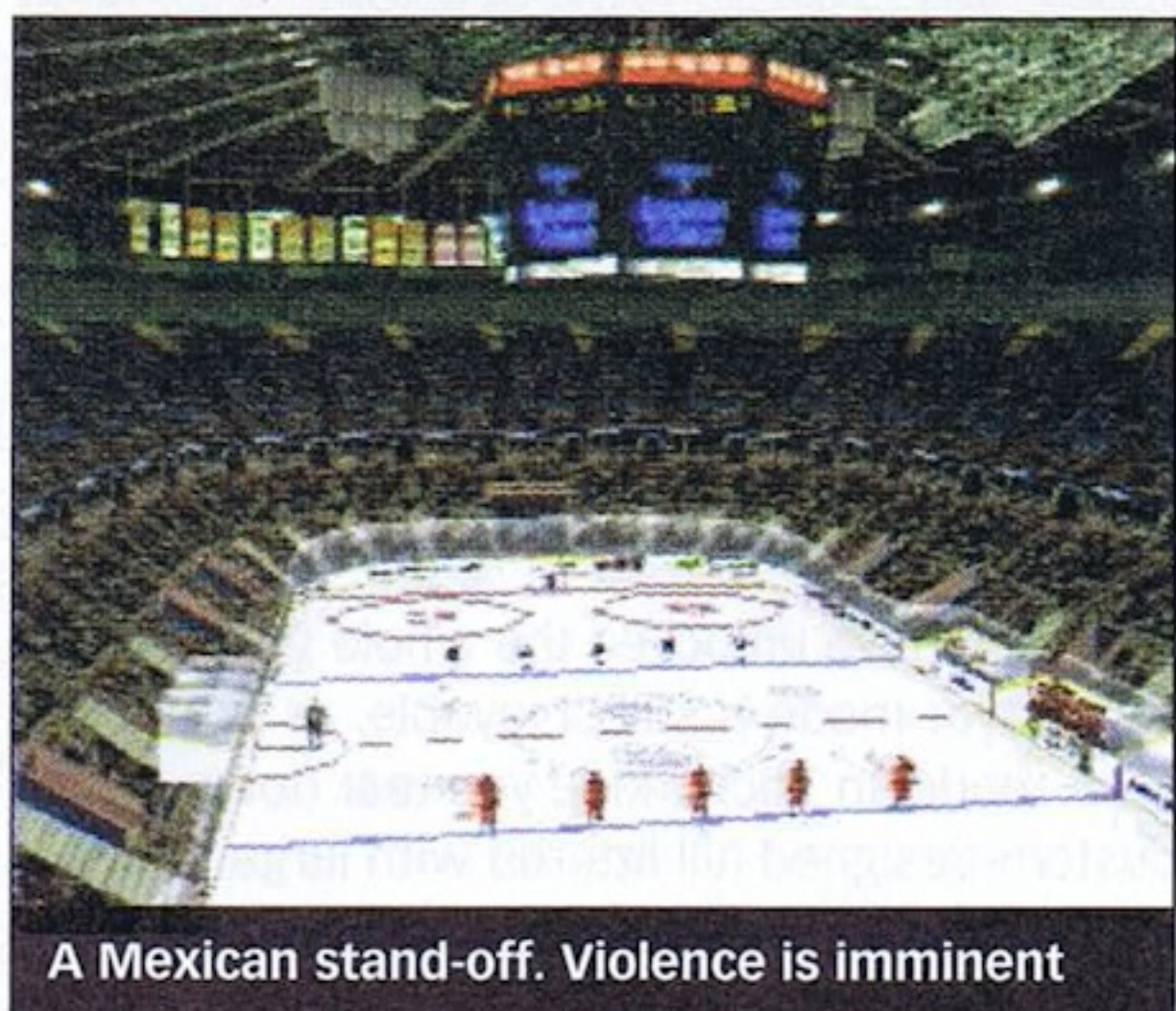
GRAPHICS AND GAMEPLAY

The two biggest improvements in the series? Two minor features are graphics and gameplay. It looks like 989 Sports have ripped the guts out of *NHL Face Off 99*, thrown out the garbage, kept the good stuff, and really built on the good aspects of their previous games.

Each player is very well detailed, especially in the replay mode, which actually looks a bit better than *NHL 2000*. Another very surprising aspect about the visuals is that this game actually runs faster than *NHL 2000*!



While the graphics are merely adequate, the real greatness of this game lies in the gameplay

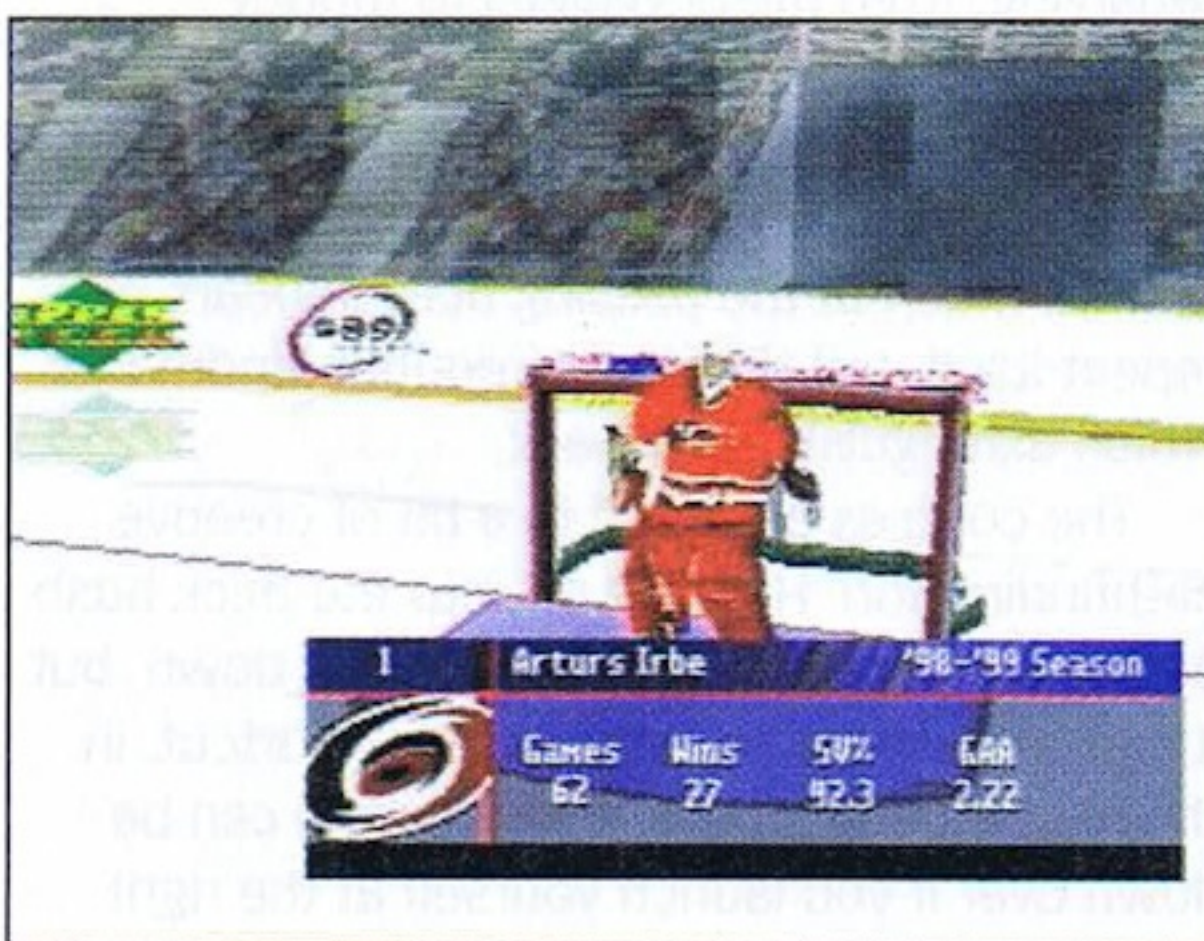


The game runs at close to 60fps, which helps add a big sense of speed and slickness (two of the most important things you need in an ice hockey game) to this title.

The upped frame rate also helps with the gameplay side of things in *NHL Face Off 2000*, especially considering that the players are much more responsive this year than last. If anything, they are a little too responsive, as players are able to stop and turn on the ice much quicker than you'd expect any human to be able to do in real life. But hey, it's a videogame so you should be able to perform tasks mere mortals cannot do.



White man in red territory



To ensure victory, get a fat goalie

NO BIG HIT

After playing *NHL 2000* then playing *NHL Face Off 2000*, one thing does stand out - the fact that *Face Off* doesn't have *NHL's* "Big Hit" button. This might sound pedantic and my gripe might only be put down to the fact that I have appreciated this unique feature in EA's latest ice hockey sim (see next page), but it does feel like quite a let-down when you have to resort to basically tapping opponents, instead of throwing them into the wall.

It's like playing an NBA game with a direct dunking feature (allowing you to attempt a dunk at almost any time), to playing one where the dunks were just selected for you. It doesn't really affect the game or the realism, but it does affect the enjoyment the user will get out of it.

All in all, *NHL Face Off* is a very surprising (in a good way) effort from 989 Sports. It's right up there with *NHL 2000* in almost every aspect, only being let down a little in the difficulty level and those little extras like the Big Hit button that EA Sports do so well. If this is any indication of the sports games to come from 989 Studios, then EA's title of the sport sim kings could be in jeopardy. Keep an eye out for *Face Off*.

Ewan Corness

PlayStation

■ **OVERALL:** Surprisingly good! Could 989 Sports finally be doing something right?

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Wow, a big improvement from last year
■ SOUND:	★★★★	Very good commentary work
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★	Very slick and quick
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Not quite as hard as <i>NHL 2000</i>
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★	Until <i>NHL Face Off 2001</i> comes out...

84
PERCENT

NHL 2000

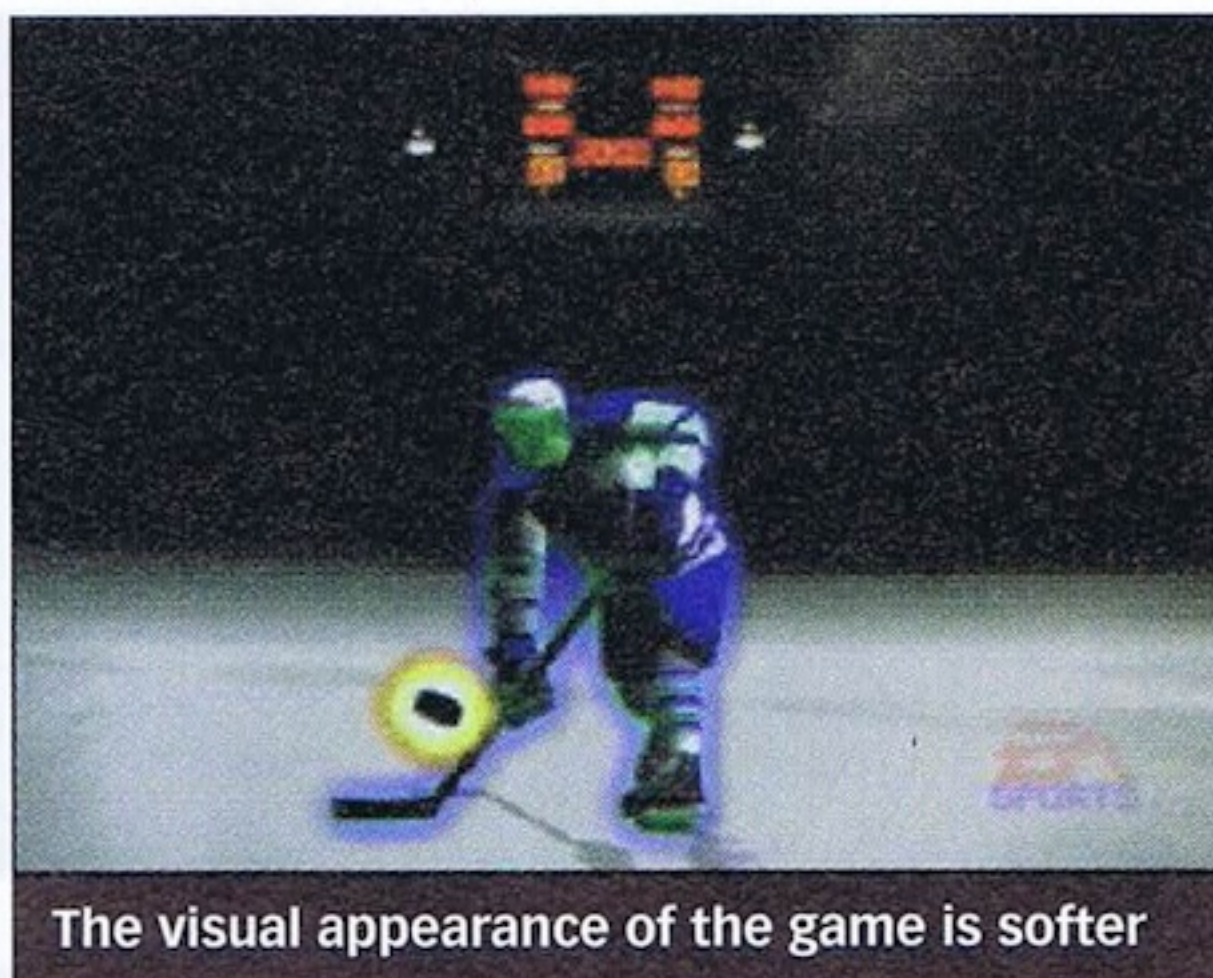
EA's annual hockey offering turns out to be everything we expected

FACT FILE

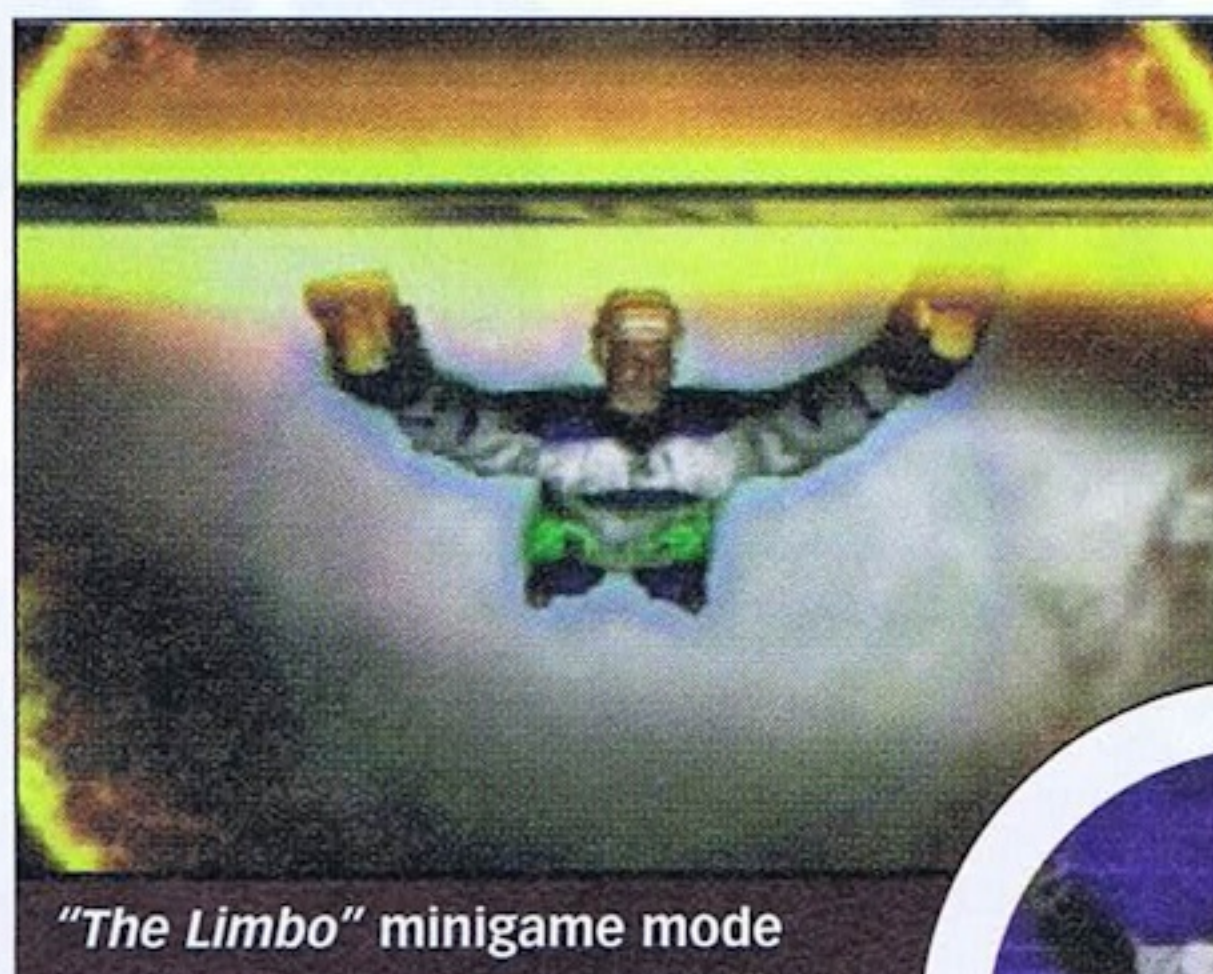
- Publisher
EA Sports
- Developer
EA Sports
- Genre
Ice Hockey
- Release Date
Out Now
- Players
One to eight
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
A really slick, sim-
but-still-arcadey ice
hockey experience

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible
- Multi Tap Adaptable
1-8 Players



The visual appearance of the game is softer



"The Limbo" minigame mode



This is what we came to see: skilful players beating the snot out of each other

EA Sports, the undisputed champions of the yearly update, have presented us with the latest instalment in their ever improving ice hockey series. But are these updates worth it? Every year new games come out with a different yearly suffix, and there's usually widespread debate as to whether or not the update had enough new features, better graphics, etc. *NHL 2000*, EA Sports' ice hockey franchise, isn't an example of a blockbuster update, but it certainly is a step up from *NHL '99*.

The main addition that has been err... "added" to *NHL 2000* is the "Big Hit" button. In *NHL '99*, if you wanted to body check (ice hockey speak for "smash") your opponent into the wall, or just straight up send them flying at any time, you'd need to try and turbo into them, and hit turbo again at the point of impact. It's not the most technical combo, but it still was a bit of a bother.

THE BIG HIT

Now, with the "Big Hit" button, all you need to do is press Δ when you're in the general vicinity of an opponent, and they'll be quickly sent to the ice, or into the wall. If you're REALLY lucky, they'll be sent through the



Somebody always has to ruin it for everyone

protective glass and into the crowd! And if you're really, REALLY lucky, they'll start a fight with you, which is always a lot of fun.

Yes, that's right, the fighting's back in *NHL 2000*, and there's another feature making a comeback after a yearly layoff - a high frame rate. Quite a few NHL fans were upset with the drop of frame rate in *NHL '99* after '98's slick gameplay. If there's any sport that needs a high frame rate it is ice hockey, as the game is all about constant motion. After *NHL '99* dropped the frame rate and added some sweeter graphics, *NHL 2000* has made up for the disappointment, and then some.

SWEET GRAPHICS, SMOOTH FRAME RATE

NHL 2000 keeps the sweet graphics and also brings back the smoother frame rate. Woohah! This feature would be redundant if the characters aren't easy to control, but thankfully they are. Some people might take a little time getting used to the fact that you can't just stop and turn around, as you are on ice skates, but once you get the hang of that you'll be well on your way to being a NHL expert.

With *NHL 2000* being an EA Sports game, all the obvious bits and pieces that you'd expect are in the game - every NHL team, All-Star teams, national teams, correct arenas and players, all the trimmings.

The arena announcer is also very authentic, as he will advise the fans to be on the lookout for lost kids and to make sure they contribute to their local ice hockey charity at the end of each game.

Even if you have no clue how to play ice hockey, with a Multi Tap and some friends, this game rocks hard. NHL fans have probably already run out and purchased this game regardless, but for the casual gamer it's still more than worthy of at least a look. Just turn off the rules and you've got your own version of full-contact speedball on ice.

Ewan Corness

PlayStation

OVERALL: NHL fans, this game will keep you entertained for the next 12 months.

GRAPHICS:	★★★★	If they were any better they'd probably slow the game down
SOUND:	★★★★	Both commentators and arena announcer sound very authentic
GAMEPLAY:	★★★	Simple, yet fun
DIFFICULTY:	★★★★	Very tough AI on the harder difficulty settings
LIFESPAN:	★★★	Until NHL 2001 comes out...

88
PERCENT

SHAO LIN

Average old movies make average new games

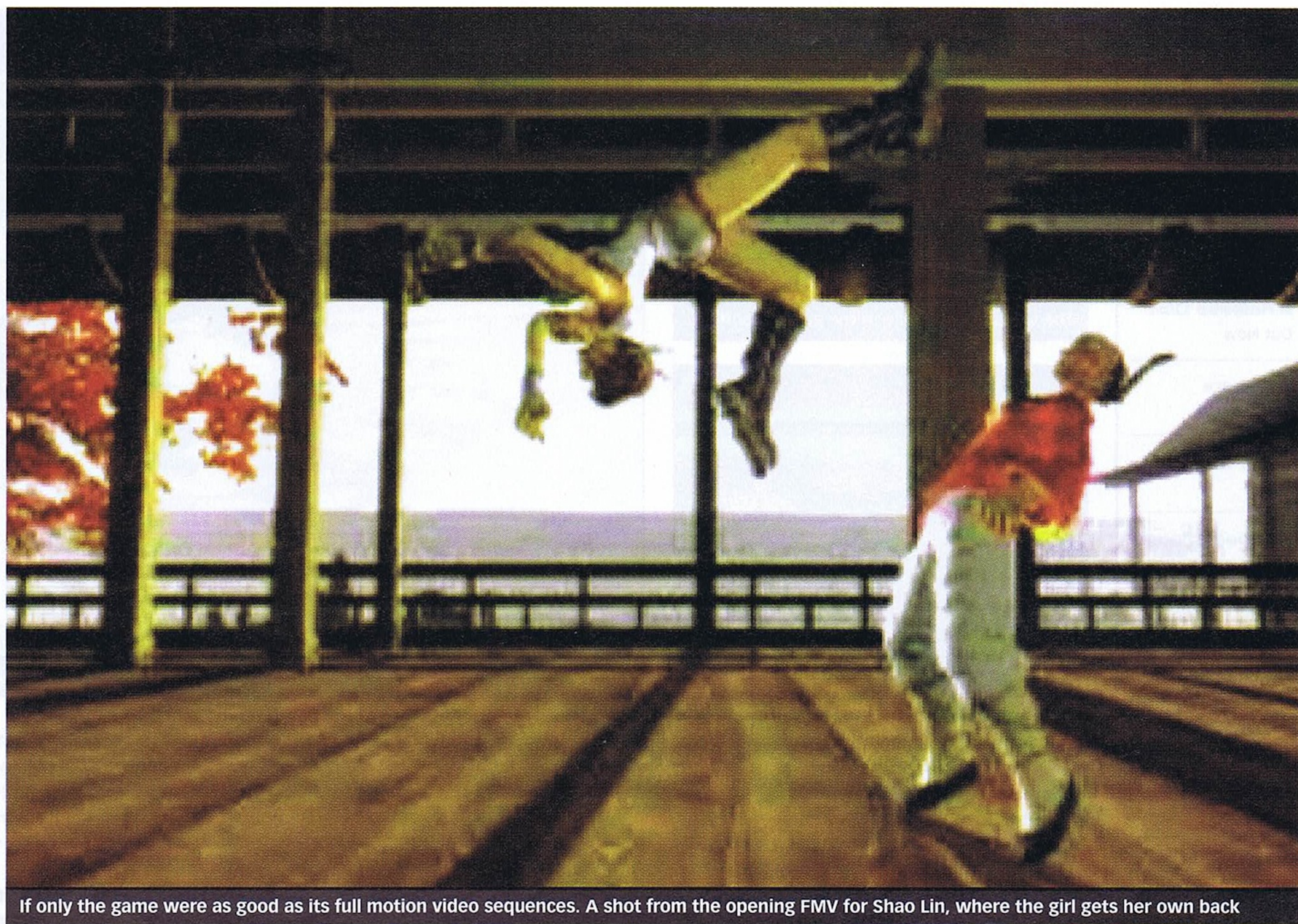


FACT FILE

- Publisher
GT Interactive
- Developer
Konami
- Genre
Fighting RPG
- Release Date
November
- Players
One to Eight
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
May fall on its head having missed the release of another multiplayer fighter

ALTERNATIVES

- Wu Tang
- Bushido Blade
- Tekken 3
- Tobal No. 1
- Dead Or Alive
- Kensei: Sacred Fist



If only the game were as good as its full motion video sequences. A shot from the opening FMV for Shao Lin, where the girl gets her own back



Shao Lin is a new breed of fighting game, blending many popular role-playing aspects with multiplayer combat. It strives to represent six actual forms of East Asian martial arts with as much emphasis on realism as possible. The main game is played single player, but there are other options which allow for up to eight players fighting simultaneously.

The only problems are due to it being the first of its kind. There are some insignificant inconsistencies and it's a bit slow to get started, but overall it does a good job at incorporating an RPG into a fighting game.

THE ROLE-PLAYING SIDE

You start by selecting either a young boy or girl as your character, choosing a fighting style for them to learn and then naming them. At first you are very weak with little endurance and few fighting moves. The more fights you win, the better your statistics become.

You begin the game in a town somewhere within the Chinese province of *Shao Lin*. There are a few buildings and some people milling about. Each of the buildings serves a purpose, be it a restaurant, inn or training temple. The storyline depends on the style of fighting you



Sometimes your enemies turn on each other



Bosses are harder, faster and tougher

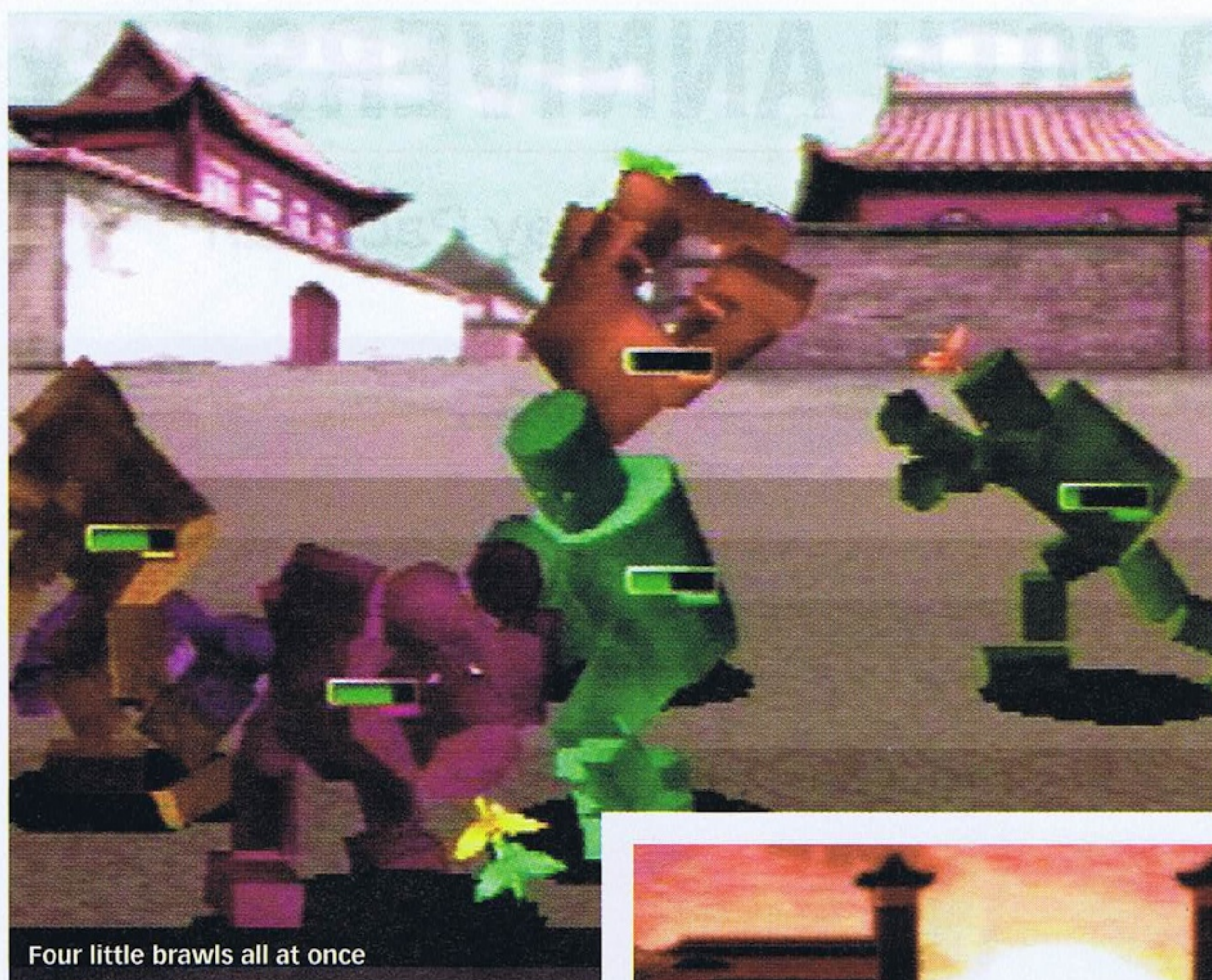
decide to begin with. If you happen to choose the style that is based in your home town, you will be welcomed by the population of that village. You can eat for free at the restaurant and train to your heart's content at the dojo.

If not, everybody will treat you like a stranger. If they are not demanding that you hand over all your money, they are telling you to get lost. You won't be allowed to train at the dojo and you will be virtually abused at the restaurant. The only way you can get anywhere in feudal China when you are outcast is to beat the snot out of everyone you talk to.

It is therefore much easier to climb up through the levels with the appropriate fighting style, as you will be much less frequently mugged in the street by three thugs at a time than an outsider.

FINDING THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN

As the boy, the storyline unfolds in a slightly different way. His townsfolk speak with him freely, explaining repeatedly in different terms that the way to attract the most beautiful women is to be a master fighter. There is a lot of this kind of hollow plot creation, most of it thrown in to form a reason to have a fight. The



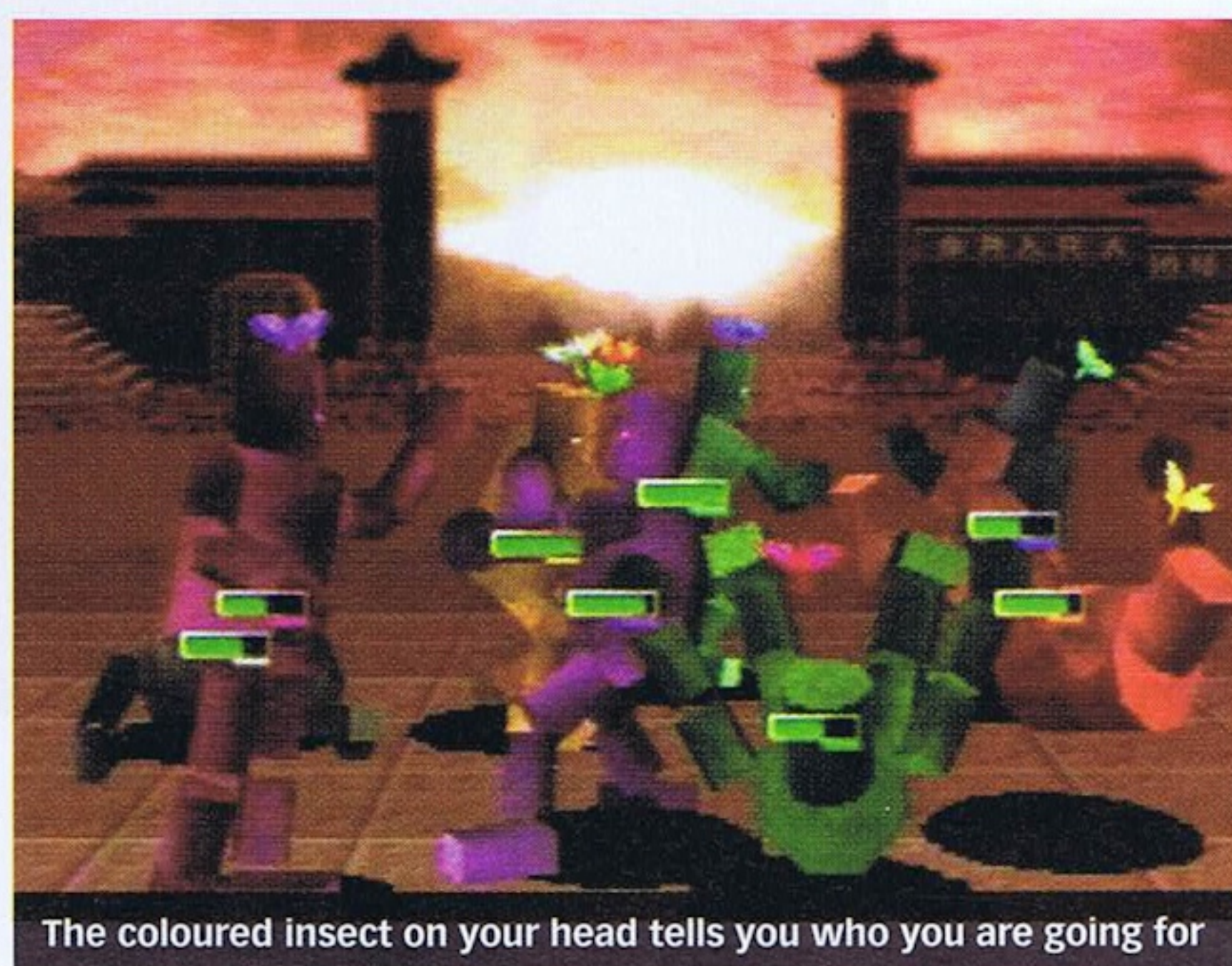
Four little brawls all at once



Eight-player fights can become frantic



It's easy to lose yourself in the frantic fray



The coloured insect on your head tells you who you are going for

boy's aim in life soon becomes to find the most beautiful woman in the land.

Your initial status is 'Child', but as the game progresses and you win more battles, your stamina, copper coins and endurance increase. As you grow older, your size and stature also increase, up through the ranks of Amateur, Hopeful, Skilled and Expert.

Your Might and Defense improve as you get better, as do your Vitality and Endurance. Your Vitality measures the remaining strength you can afford to put to your life bar in case you lose a fight. You can refill your Vitality by eating at a restaurant.

Your Endurance bar simply ticks down constantly, forcing you to sleep occasionally at various inns during your journey. Occasionally a restaurateur or innkeeper will challenge you to a duel for his services. The game is riddled with such ridiculous excuses to have a fight.

THE BATTLE SYSTEM

There are six schools of fighting, each with its own temple in its own city. Defeating any of the six temples earns you a new stance or technique to broaden your range of moves.

Once a new stance is learned, a whole new range of moves comes with it.

The whole game hinges on its fighting system, one designed to capacitate up to eight fighters at once on the screen. Most fights are between just you and one other opponent, but occasionally you'll be accosted by a gang of thugs, martial arts students and panda bears.

In these confounding brawls, up to four energy bars will appear in the corners of the screen, including yours. You focus on only one enemy at a time, who is denoted by a coloured mark above their head. If there are other foes very near to the subject of your attacks, they too will receive damage from your blows. Changing the focus to another foe is as easy as pressing L1.

At first you will feel rather impotent as your knowledge of the arts is minimal. You have a button for Punch, one for Kick, one for Reversals and another for Defense. Depending on your chosen style, all of these buttons (and combinations thereof) perform rather different manoeuvres.

For example, with Hung Gar fighting, holding the Defense button and tapping Punch

will cause your character to do a cartwheel over the head of their selected adversary. Although there aren't that many moves within any one fighting technique, after a few hours of play through the single player game you will acquire a broad variety of styles and stances.

The problem with the different stances is that you need a few seconds to be able to assume each one. In a one-on-one fight it is simple. You have plenty of time to assume any stance you like right after knocking your opponent to the floor.

With more than one person trying to beat you up it becomes almost impossible to try new styles. It can be hard enough just to survive an onslaught of five to one. Often you will find yourself repeating the same dull combo on everyone just to get the fight over and done with.

MULTIPLAYER GAMES

Aside from the flawed to the point of silly RPG, there are some other options for multiplayer fights in the main menu.

Although the low polygon count results in characters who look like living dolls, the framerate remains surprisingly lag-free even in the eight-player rumbles. Sure, there are often so many people crowded in the middle of the screen that some are obscured by others, but this only adds to the heightened sense of endangerment felt by all involved.

There is nothing to compare with an eight-player brawl. While the RPG side of the game may be sexist, slow, repetitive and lacking direction, the multiplayer fight options make up for it. Being attacked from all sides by people you know, who are all sitting right next to you, screaming in your ear... well, it just can't be beat.

Shao Lin is a successful effort for the most part, but players should be warned that as a single player game it falls short of stunning. The loading times after each fight, presumably to tally up your character's added stats, are unimpressive at over twelve seconds. However, if you are after a decent multiplayer fighting game (i.e. not *Wu Tang*) then this will reward.

Hillous Lesslie

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Standard Controller
- Multi Tap Adaptable 1-8 Players

SECOND OPINION



KEVIN CHEUNG

It really doesn't make me want to buy a PlayStation just to play *Shao Lin* or anything, but this little number does have quite a few surprisingly neat ideas and concepts behind it. Fitting in somewhere between the realms of 2D and 3D, *Shao Lin* offers anyone who cares the opportunity to fight more than just one opponent at once, practicing a wide variety of true martial art styles. Still, its makeshift appearance means it's only for real fighting fanatics.

PlayStation

OVERALL: As an RPG, it lacks plot, but as a multiplayer fighting game, it is a genuine first.

GRAPHICS:	★★★	Amazingly fluid gameplay for eight players fighting simultaneously
SOUND:	★	Annoying, badly stereotyped Chinese noises
GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	At first non-existent, but it grows with time
DIFFICULTY:	★★	The poor design allows you to win always by using just one move
LIFESPAN:	★★★★★	The RPG lasts and you'll always have time to bash seven friends

76
PERCENT

PAC MAN WORLD 20TH ANNIVERSARY

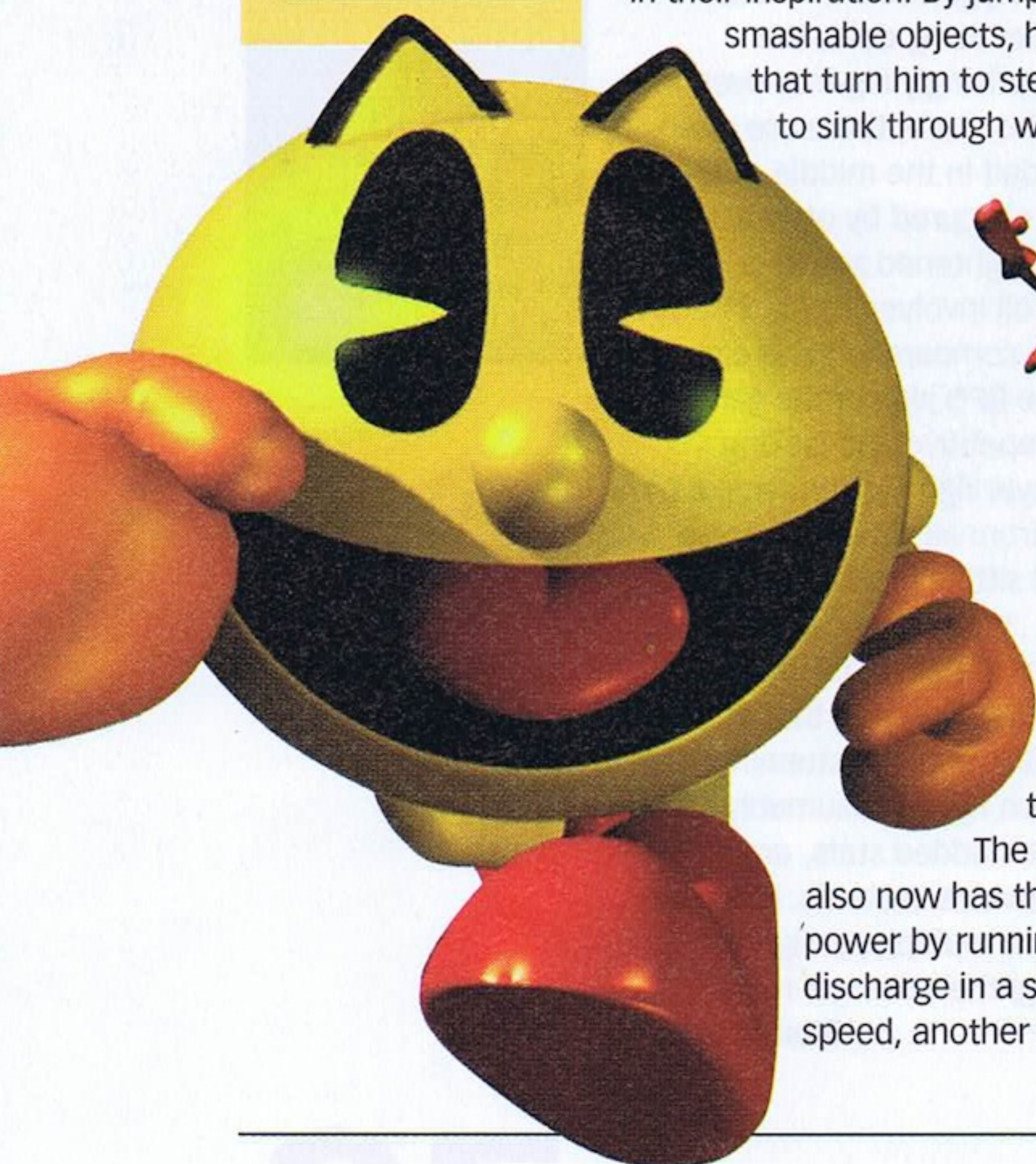
Eat magic pellets that turn the monsters blue. Then play Pac Man

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
Namco
- **Developer**
Namco USA
- **Genre**
Platformer
- **Release Date**
Out Now
- **Players**
One
- **No. of CD's**
One
- **Expectations**
It's Pac Man. The 2D king makes a venture into the third dimension

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible



access the previously forbidden trade secrets of Sonic The Hedgehog. Pac Man also now has the ability to build up power by running on the spot, to discharge in a sudden burst of speed, another Sonic technique.

It's been almost 20 years since a small, pizza shaped character gave the endless struggle of video gaming a tangible icon. Two generations have grown up identifying with Pac Man's never ending battle against impossible odds in a hostile environment.

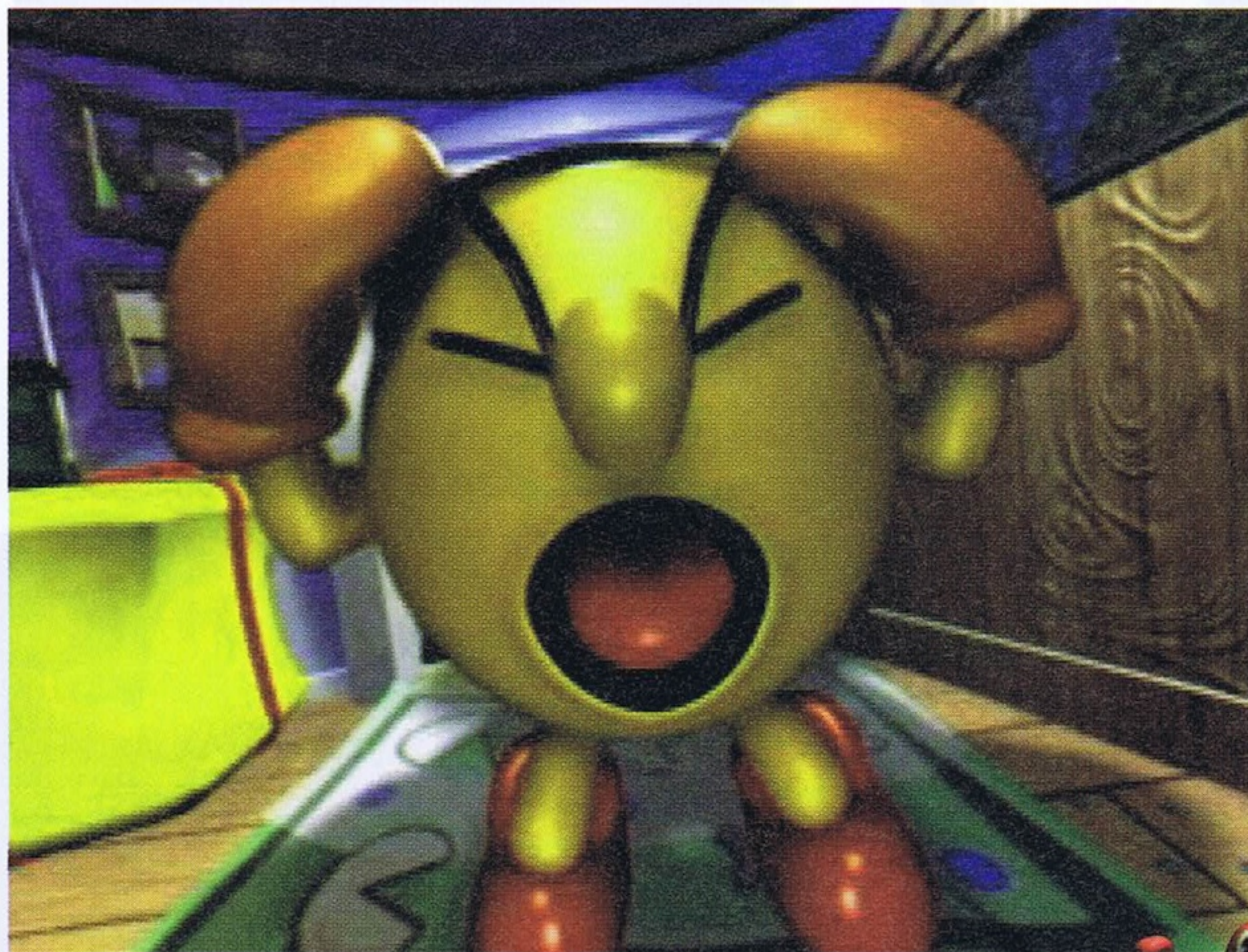
The Namco game designer responsible first had his vision of the character when he was starting to eat a pizza, took away a slice, and saw what was left. The advance of three dimensional graphics in the past two decades has now allowed for a more literal interpretation of the little yellow spheroid and the world he inhabits.

Pac Man World combines traditional platforming adventure elements with the visual iconography of the Pac World and its Pac Inhabitants. Bonuses scattered around the levels take the form of the fruits he has always pursued, and the dim-witted wandering monsters are either the standard ghosts, or based around the theme of the level, such as pirate skeletons for the Caribbean, or tentacled monsters for space.

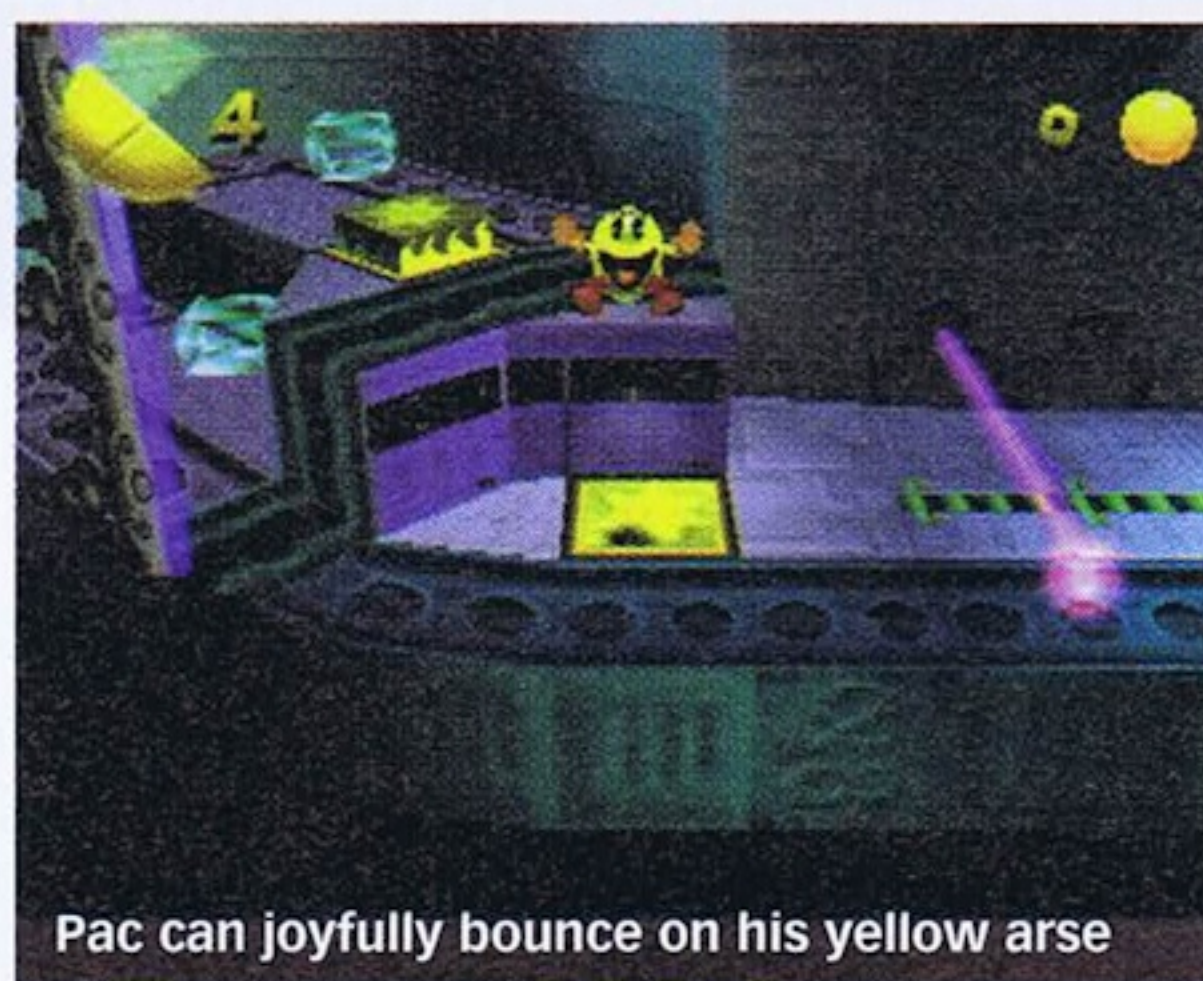
The dots Pac Man eats are sparsely scattered around each level, but triggering key events can fill a previously empty space with a grid of the delicious marbles, replete with a glowing power pellet to turn the tables on your foes.

PAC PLAGIARISM

Entering a saturated and mature market like platform games, *Pac Man World* can't help but be influenced by other entrants in the field, but some of Pac Man's new powers are rather overt in their inspiration. By jumping on top of certain smashable objects, he can get powerups that turn him to steel. This allows him to sink through watery caverns and



Who would've thought he was even capable of receiving an anal probe?



Pac can joyfully bounce on his yellow arse

The dots you munch on don't just rack up your bonus at the end of the level, you can also fire them at your enemies, but this and the other features don't come off as being malapropos. The platform aspect of *Pac Man World* conveys the feeling of being in a large three dimensional maze, with backtracking and confusion commonplace.

It straddles the paths of intimidation and friendliness, too. When Pac Man uses his bouncing power to reach high platforms the massive grin on his dial seems all the larger. The Quest mode borrows the look of the Pac Man cartoon show and is also overwhelmingly reminiscent of the 1986 arcade hit *Pac Land*, but with a more forgiving pressure level and more involved challenges.

THE ORIGINAL AND THE BEST

Pac Man World also includes the original, 1980 arcade version of Pac Man. As a nice touch they have added Dual Shock support, for when you lose a life the controller vibrates to accent your trauma.

Rounding out the package is a hybrid of the traditional maze action and the 3D interpretation of the Quest mode. Selecting the Mazes option from the main menu brings up a standard Pac Man style maze rendered in the Quest Modes engine, with three levels of difficulty across the 6 worlds Pac Man explores in his daring mission.

What, there was a plot to this? But of course. The entire extended Pac Family, including Ms Pac Man, and even their friend Pooka from *Dig Dug*, have been kidnapped by an army of ghost monsters! Assuming the comic drama surrounding a clan of inoffensive spherical creatures doesn't grip you, then you have to assess this product solely on its merits.

You get the Quest game, the original Pac Man, and the white elephant cross of the two. The question with *Pac Man World* is whether novelty value alone can justify the new release purchase price. It is, though, the best novelty money can buy.

James Cottee

PlayStation

■ **OVERALL:** If you want a platform game, and a Pac Man emulator to boot, then *Pac Man World* is your heart's desire.

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	Smooth, colourful, crisp, but still simplistic
■ SOUND:	★★	Music and effects hardly Grammy material
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★	Maximal value when employed as a party game
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Average platformer, or rock hard arcade action
■ LIFESPAN:	★★	It's all over before you know it

77
PERCENT

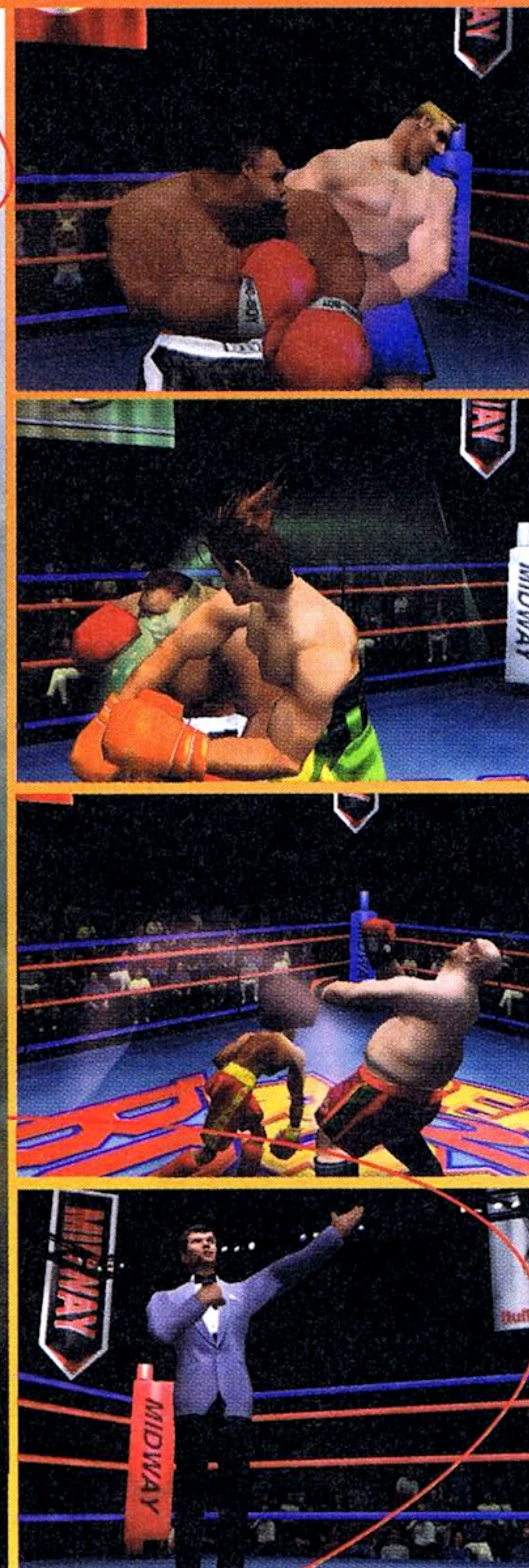
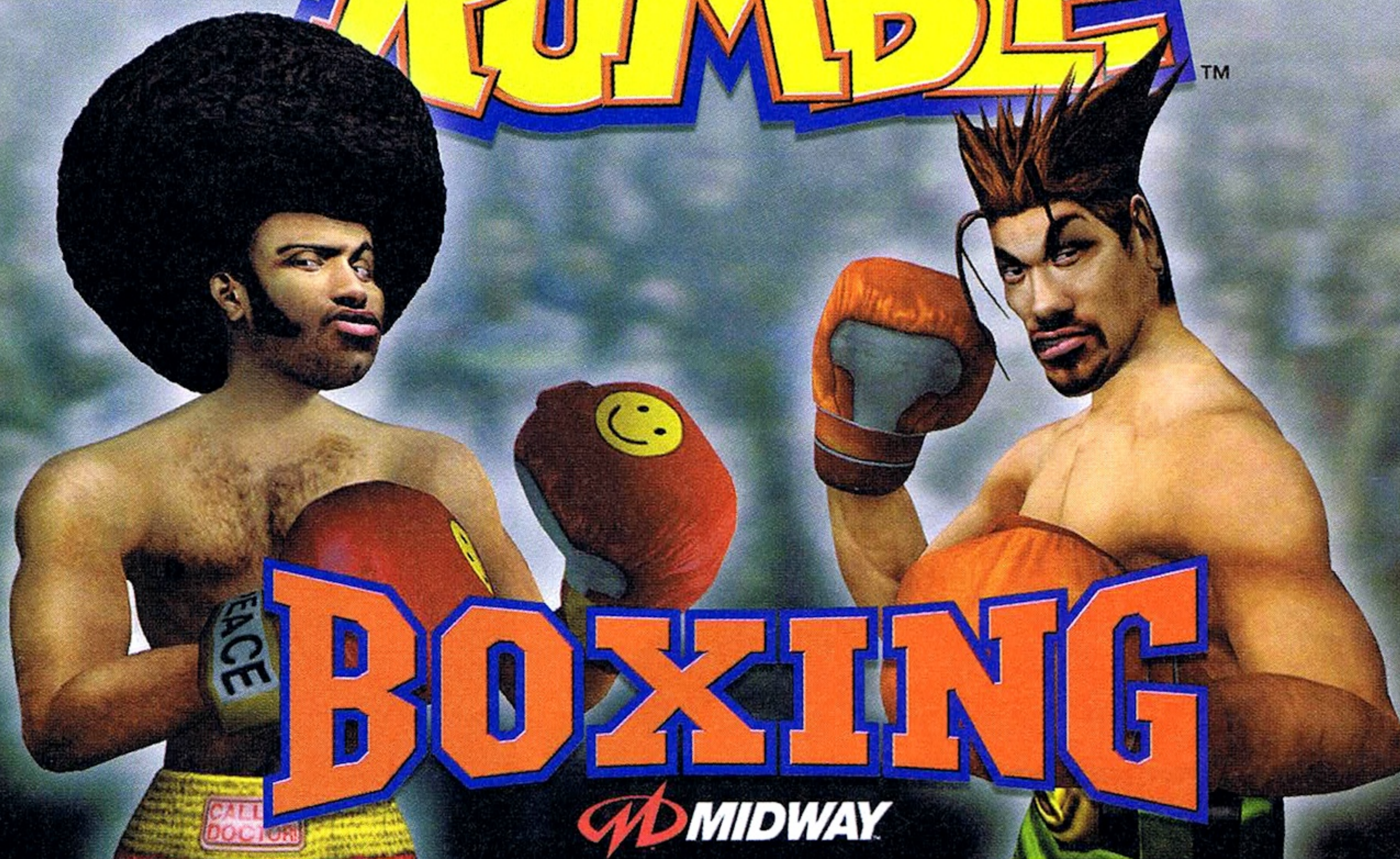
are YOU ready?

PUT UP YOUR DUKES



PAL

READY 2 RUMBLE



PlayStation®

GameStar Play

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Ready to Rumble Boxing PSX N64 & Dreamcast (G).

Compete as one of 16 boxers, each with their own fighting style, in this exciting game of skill. Each boxer is hyper realistic with an unlimited number of punch combinations for both realistic and over-the-top boxing styles. Choose either Arcade mode or Championship mode and train your boxer for the class title fight.

Harvey Norman

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MTV SNOWBOARDING

What does cable TV have to do with snowboarding? Who cares!

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
THQ
- **Developer**
Radical
- **Genre**
Snowboarding
- **Release Date**
TBA
- **Players**
One or Two
- **No. of CD's**
One
- **Expectations**
It's a Snowboarding game. You get to hoon around and fall over lots

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible



MTV Snowboarding - the latest corporate heavyweight to covet the cynical, radical youth dollar

Perform unrealistic, unsatisfying tricks

Sport and racing games have always been big on the PlayStation, and snowboarding seemed a logical extension of that franchise. Good graphics make for good looking stunts, the demographic seemed right, and before anybody knew it there were half a dozen snowboarding games available. *MTV Snowboarding* is an attempt to aim one of these games at a "hip" and presumably Generation-X audience.

The more tricks that you pull off in a jump, the more points you get for it. One nice feature is that the game starts penalising you for using the same move more than once in a race, preventing players from learning one high-scoring move and repeating it indefinitely. You need to accumulate 20,000 points to qualify, which proves to be surprisingly difficult.

REASONABLE GRAPHICS

The graphics are fairly good for the characters and the basic tracks. The trees look a bit blocky up close, but the animations are fairly fluid and some of the lighting effects are very nice, especially on the night track. A bit more variety and detail in track features would have been appreciated.

The sounds are pretty average. There is the usual swish of the board on the snow, but not much else. Some nasty sounds for when your snowboarder plunges onto rocks from a great height would certainly have added to the realism. This is a game with MTV in the title, so the game would probably pride itself on its music. This is warranted too, with some toe-tapping tracks from the punk, pop and ska genres to groove to while you skid and crash down the mountains.

The gameplay options are fairly limited, unfortunately. There are no real slalom or special tracks, and the half-pipes that you can occasionally find in the tracks aren't that exciting. Basically, you have to keep yourself really interested in flipping around in strange ways to rack up points. If this starts to wear thin, then the game's shelf-life won't be looking good.

Luckily, there are interesting options to try. Two-player mode is quite fun, and you can choose from trick or race mode (although race mode is less enjoyable). There is also a track editor with some handy features, if you're into that side of things. For the game to have a really lasting single-player experience would require someone who took their snowboarding pretty seriously.

Leon Tranter

PlayStation

■ **OVERALL:** A competent snowboarding jaunt, overshadowed by more worthwhile games that are already out.

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	Good lighting and few glitches
■ SOUND:	★★★	Soundtrack is groovy, but too few effects
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★	Two-player is fun, but single-player wears thin quickly
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★★	Surprisingly difficult
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★	Hard to see it lasting very long

71
PERCENT

THE SMURFS

Some programmers ate one too many Smurfberries...



FACT FILE

- Publisher
Ozisoft
- Developer
Infogrames
- Genre
Scrolling Platformer
- Release Date
TBA
- Players
One
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
Control Hefty as he battles Gargamel's minions in an attempt to keep Smurftown safe

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Standard Controller

All of us oldies remember *the Smurfs*, and even those slightly younger should know who these little blue guys are since they have made a revival in recent times. Someone has finally worked up the nerve to produce a game based on Papa Smurf and his band and they've decided to produce it on the PlayStation where a true 3D game can truly shine.

Unfortunately, the game doesn't live up to its expectations, even remotely. About the only thing it does for those old enough to have conscious thought is to remind us how cute the Smurfs are and how the simple elegance of the cartoon series worked so well.

LITTLE PEOPLE MAKE LITTLE JOY

There are so many disappointments in this title, it's difficult to know where to begin. How about the fact that although the character models are all 3D based, the entire game is a side scrolling platformer reminiscent of titles such as *Klonoa* (which did the job a WHOLE lot better too).

Each level involves you controlling Hefty Smurf travelling from left to right, jumping at the appropriate times, and using the sparsely scattered powerups to help arrive at the end point. There is a storyline but the reason why you participate in various levels stretches it beyond breaking point.

A baffling omission is the fact that the game has no Dual Shock support. This is yet another facet of the game that makes you think back to the titles of 18 months ago. The title has two games. It's *A Piece of Cake* is a separate game with its own opening movie but in reality is just a set of tutorial levels to prepare you for the adventure mode based *It's No Picnic* game.

These tutorial levels also have a mini-game where you can take care of Baby Smurf. We sat a two-year old down in front of the TV with this mini-game and he was not only engrossed in it, but he actually understood what needed to be done and kept Baby Smurf happy until even HE got bored - seriously.

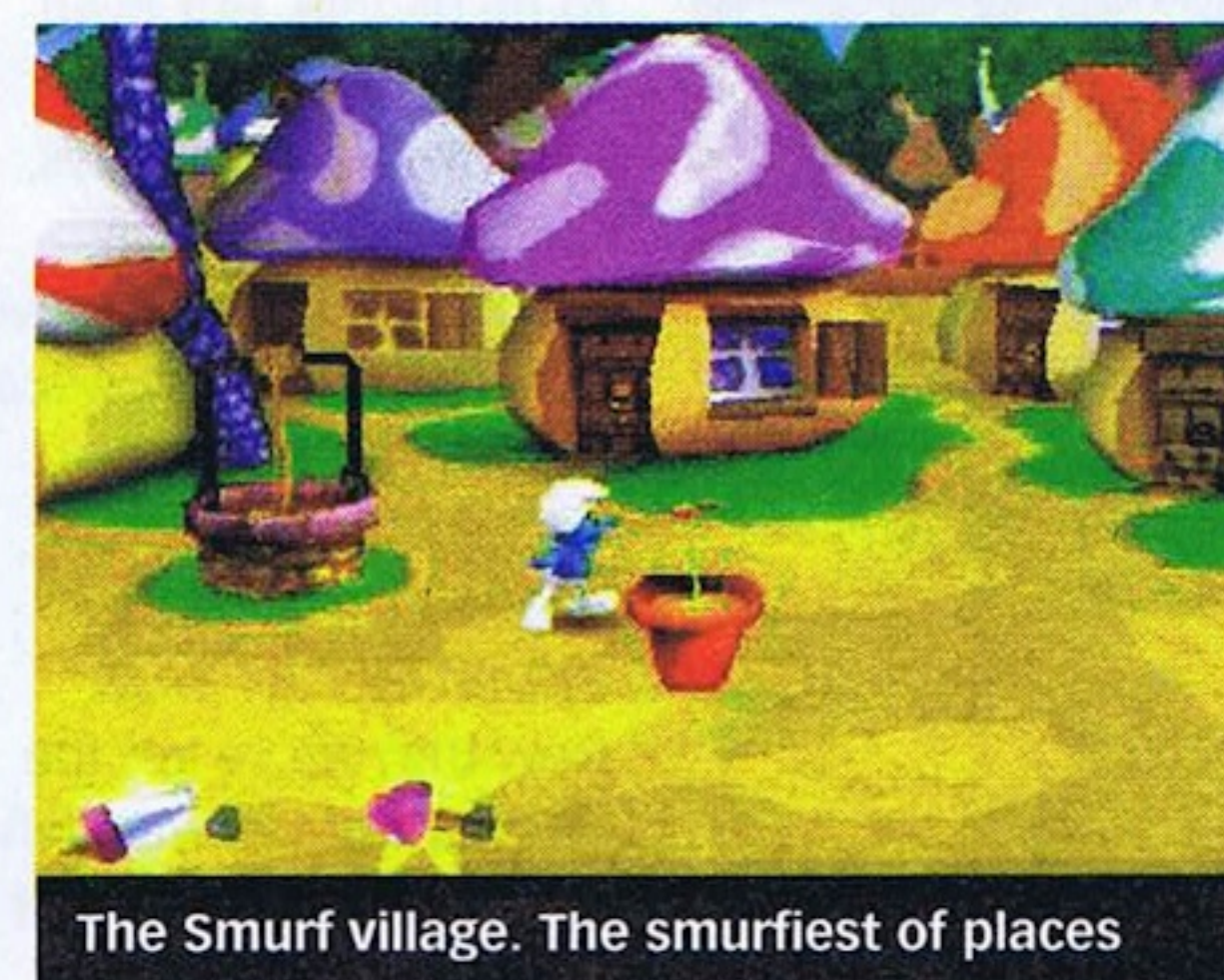
Couple this simplicity with the extras thrown into these levels that do absolutely nothing but endear you with the little blue people. Things like picking flowers, petting rabbits and playing trumpets are all allowed for in this portion of the game.



Gargamel's always trying to turn the Smurfs into gold. Can Infogrames do the same?



Lavish backgrounds, adorable characters



The Smurf village. The smurfiest of places

THAT SMURFY SMURF

Luckily, the rest of the game is not so simple or basic. The other mode of play is a story-based adventure. What's interesting is that the introductory movie portrays one plot development but when you get into the gameplay itself, it turns out to be something completely different.

Each level has Hefty venturing through a variety of terrain, all of which faithfully fit in with *the Smurf* cartoon atmosphere. Forests, snowbound cliffs and dark caverns are all rendered in the classic Smurf style, bringing you into the bright, colourful environment from your childhood.

Along the way you come up against beasties and animals such as giant birds but they are all too easy to defeat. The powerups allow you to shrink, or provide a boost to the strength of your blows or speed. As you progress, you collect food to gain another life, and moons to add to your percentage completion rate.

If you take the game at face value, you'd think that it was aimed at those of us who are under 8. However, Infogrames are obviously hoping the vast audience of Smurf-watchers, old and young will pick this title to reminisce if nothing else. Steer clear and look for *Klonoa* and other similar titles in the bargain bin.

Andrew Parsons

PlayStation

■ **OVERALL:** Gained extra points just for being the Smurfs, this game is just plain average.

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	Classic cartoon style has been retained
■ SOUND:	★★★	Ahhh... the chipmunk voices of the little people
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★	Side scrolling platform action - ho hum
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★	One star for each sub-game
■ LIFESPAN:	★★	Even the Smurf fans will ditch this fairly quickly

65
PERCENT

KINGSLEY'S ADVENTURE

Looks like Psygnosis have finally laid a smelly egg

FACT FILE

■ **Publisher**
Sony

■ **Developer**
Psygnosis

■ **Genre**
Platformer

■ **Release Date**
TBA

■ **Players**
One

■ **No. of CD's**
One

■ **Expectations**
A below-average 3D platformer where you'll get lost in the fog quite often

GAME FEATURES

Memory Card

Standard Controller

Psygnosis seem to be a company that runs hot or extremely cold. Just compare titles such as *Formula 1 98* to *Wipeout 2097*. Now, they have decided to have a go at the 3D platforming market, attacking the bandicoot, gecko, dragon and crocodile who concurrently rule the platforming world.

OFF DAIRY PRODUCTS

In *Kingsley's Adventure*, the player takes control of an orphan foxling as he embarks on a quest to defeat the evil Bad Custard and become a True Knight of the Fruit Kingdom. Along the way, you will come face to face with moles, porpoises, dogs and mice all dressed in human fashion and who seem to be only able to speak with an awful ear-punishing squeak and grunt.

That's basically where the cuteness stops. The storyline is lame, the control mechanism is fiddly and the puzzle elements are so contrived that even the most hardcore game addict is going to wonder why. Sure, the theme of the game is a wacky, zany world full of cute little animals all pretending to be people. But even those stories didn't have fruit-shaped keys, or porpoises running around calling themselves "Captain No Beard, Second Fiercest Pirate".

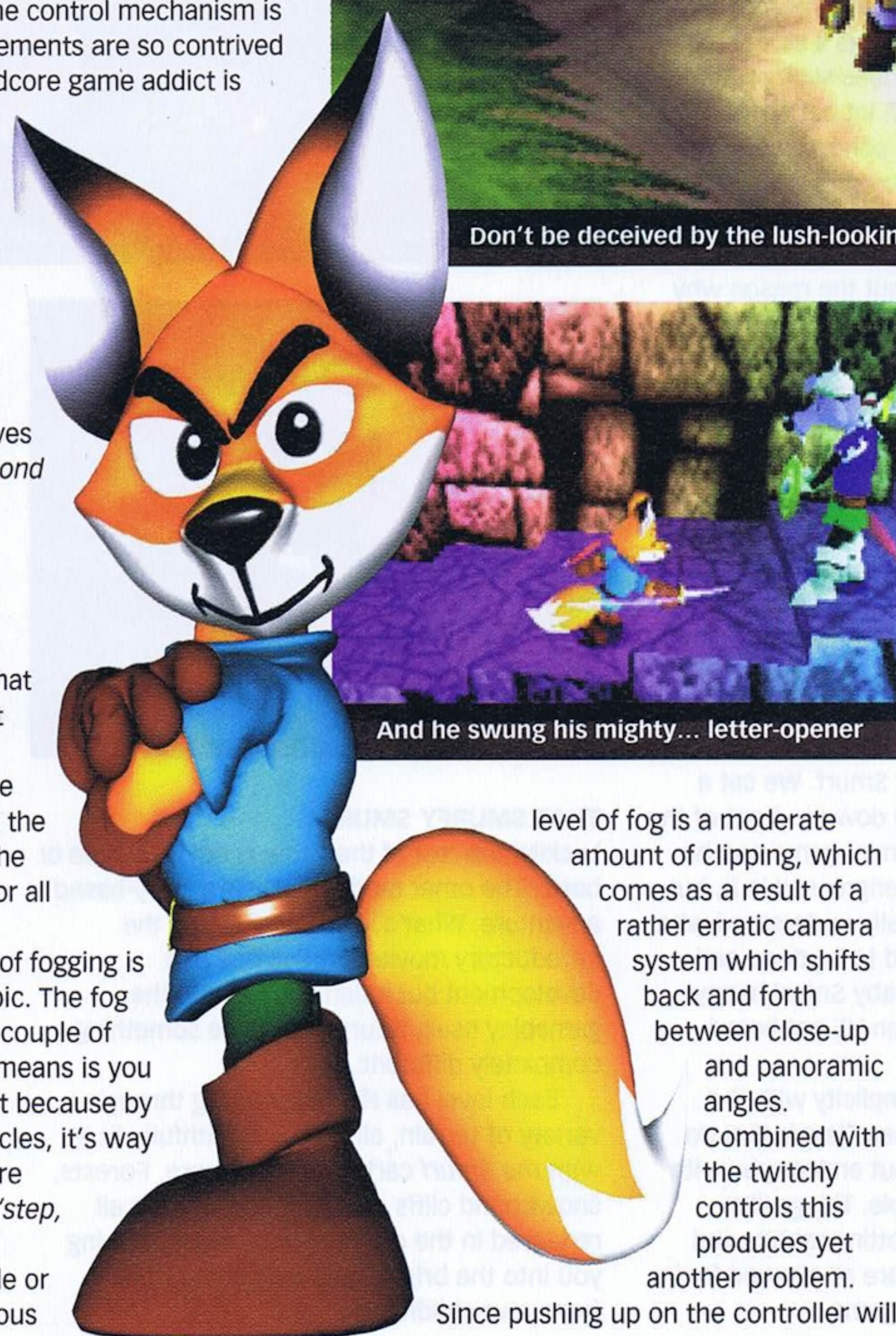
MORE FOG THAN A CEMETERY AT 3AM

Now that we've got the story out of the way, what of the game engine that generates the world *Kingsley* and his pals live in? Let's put it this way: the graphics in *Kingsley* is the highlight of the game, for all the wrong reasons.

Firstly, the amount of fogging is incredibly claustrophobic. The fog starts to appear only a couple of steps away. What this means is you can't run anywhere fast because by the time you see obstacles, it's way too late. Instead, you are reduced to a crawling "step, pause, step" approach whether you are outside or in. On top of the atrocious



Don't be deceived by the lush-looking scenery: it looks shocking when in motion



And he swung his mighty... letter-opener

level of fog is a moderate amount of clipping, which comes as a result of a rather erratic camera system which shifts back and forth between close-up and panoramic angles. Combined with the twitchy controls this produces yet another problem.

Since pushing up on the controller will

always move *Kingsley* in the direction he is facing at the time, it is near impossible to get him to run in a straight line!

WE NEED A PUZZLE HERE

Another aspect of the game that falls flat on its face are the puzzles. It's as though the game was too easy at first and attempts were made to make it more difficult. Unfortunately these attempts feel fake. It's all the typical "jump over here, hit the button, jump back, jump on that platform, run over to the gate before it closes" type of action and is just done poorly.

We've already mentioned the voices but they are worth describing again. Some effort went in to recording different voices for each character. Unfortunately it's the gobbledygook baby talk that *Croc* and the *Gobboes* made famous - for EVERY single character. The background music is so cheesy and repetitive that you will want to turn the volume off within minutes of playing the game.

If you're considering purchasing *Kingsley's Adventure*, think seriously about it. The story and characters are aimed at youngsters but the control mechanism and level design will just leave them so frustrated that this may be your first black coffee cup coaster.

Rhys Jacobssen

PlayStation

■ **OVERALL:** Only half a game full of half-baked ideas. Why Psygnosis, why?

■ GRAPHICS:	★★	Clipping and major fogging overshadow (joke) everything else
■ SOUND:	★★	REALLY irritating musical score and "voices"
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★	Bog-standard jump, collect and flicking of switches
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Controls and camera angles conspire to make the game harder
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★	How long can you last collecting fruit-keys and jumping platforms

51
PERCENT

DEMOLITION RACER

The Bowl is back! Long live the genre of destructive driving!

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
Ozisoft
- **Developer**
Pitbull Studios
- **Genre**
Destructive Driving
- **Release Date**
Out Now
- **Players**
One or two
- **No. of CD's**
TBA
- **Expectations**
Vigilante 8, but really really really fast. Twisted Metal exhumed and aired

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

It has been a long time since we've had a game like Destruction Derby. Others have come and gone which included the fantasy of weapons, such as Vigilante 8, Rogue Trip, Twisted Metal 1 to 3 and Felony 11-79, but where is the Bowl?

Here we have *Demolition Racer*. It brings us back to the good ol' days when racing cars was all about smashing cars. This ain't no rally racer pal, this is full on demolition with all sixteen competitors on the track together. It even has the stereotypical garage rock soundtrack.

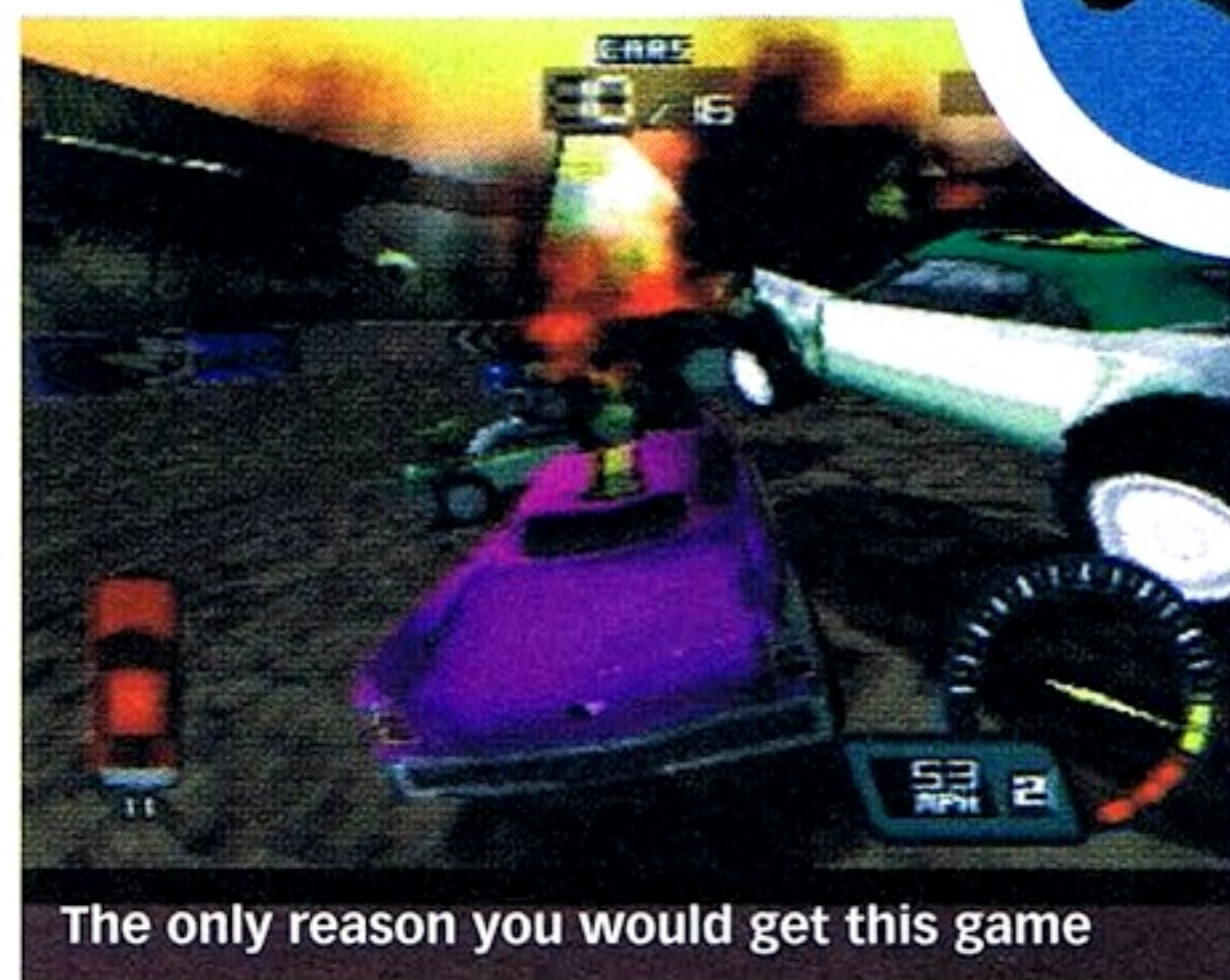
LOADS OF MODES

There are several game modes including Demolition (the good old smash 'em up race), Chicken (head to head), The Chase (all against one), Suicide (race backwards) and Last Man Standing (the BOWL). All is laid out before you in a stylishly gritty set of menu screens.

Racing is as simple as pressing the X button and steering, but you can alter the configuration to employ the dual thumb sticks. The brake doubles as reverse and there are also buttons assigned to the horn and handbrake. It really gives me a thrill to beep the horn in



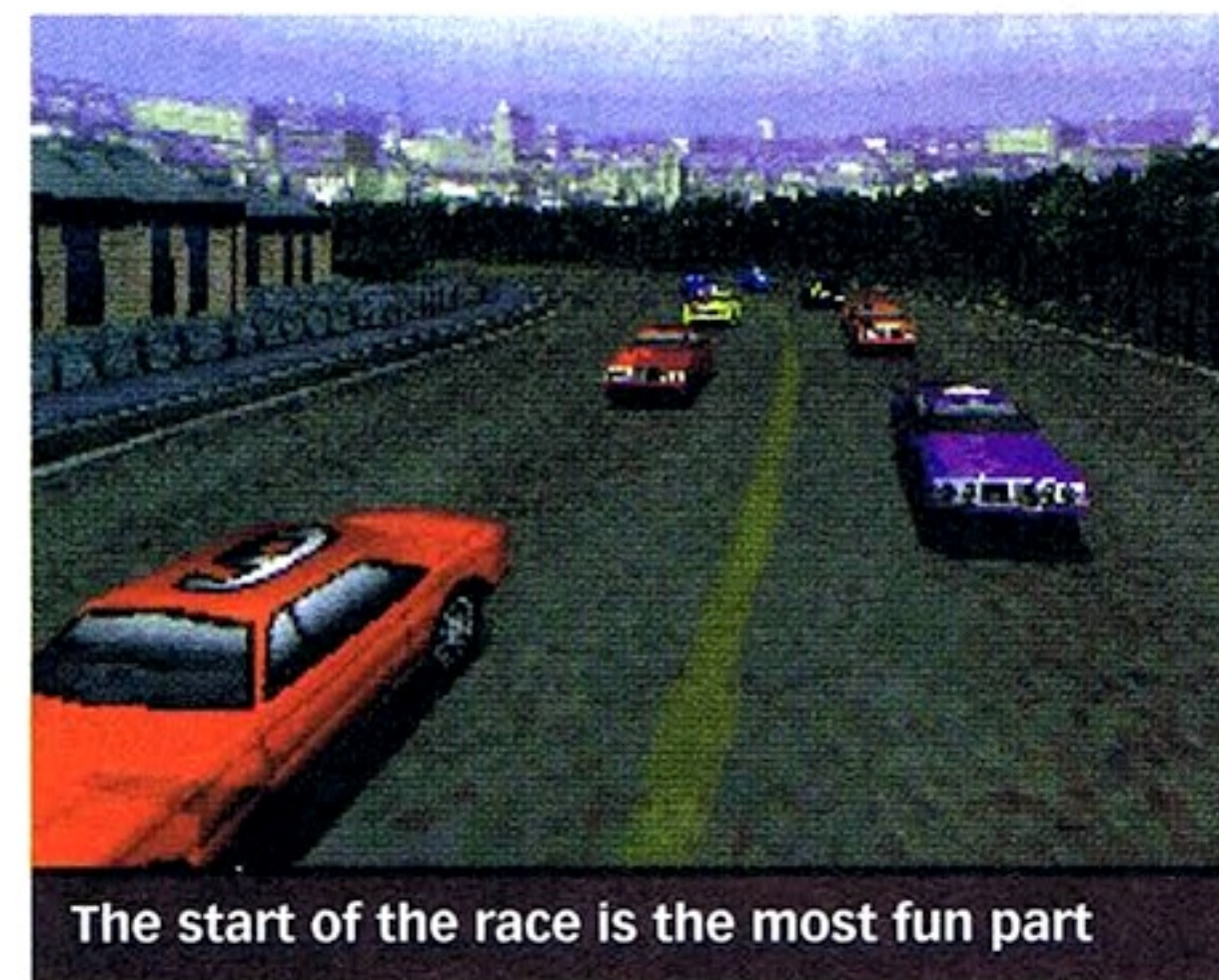
We welcome with outstretched arms a game that awards points for bad driving



The only reason you would get this game



The replay mode is acceptable, just



The start of the race is the most fun part

this game. It's like yelling for quiet in a Kindergarten classroom.

Unfortunately this game looks terrible. The developers have tried very hard to get as much detail into the surrounding trackside scenery as possible, but all they have managed to do in effect is make everything look exceptionally grainy and indistinct.

There is a definite dirty feel underlying the whole game. Races are always run through abandoned parking lots, on construction sites, etc. There are many chicken wire fences, concrete pilons and unexplained sand piles to be seen and the road's surface varies from tarmac to deep mud.

LET THE GAMES BEGIN!

You begin with a choice of three cars and a few tracks and unlock more stuff by competing in the Demolition tournaments. Points are awarded during a race by ramming others, with bonuses for sending someone into a spin, setting them on fire or destroying their engine altogether. There are also power-up boxes lying around on the track. Some give you points, others fix your car up a set percentage.

You must hit others with the front end of your car or else you won't receive points. There is a diagram of your vehicle on the screen at all times, letting you know how many more collisions it will sustain before

abruptly conking out when the damage percentage reaches zero.

Unfortunately, this method means that ramming people with your rear will reap no rewards. You have to persist with your front end if you wish to rack up the points.

From the first loading screen, the game prepares the player for an all-out brawl. *Demolition Racer* may not be the refined piece of programming excellence you are after, but it sure is hard not to have fun while playing it. It's a Picasso among games: messy, expensive and not much fun to look at, but worth it in the end.

Hillous Lesslie

PlayStation

■ **OVERALL:** It does the job, but no better than Destruction Derby 2 did.

- **GRAPHICS:** ★ Gets the award for the messiest looking PlayStation title ever
- **SOUND:** ★★★★★ The game's best aspect; the crashes are meaty, the music hard
- **GAMEPLAY:** ★★★ Nothing new. You just ram things really. Winning comes second
- **DIFFICULTY:** ★ Not so much a matter of skill as a matter of persistence
- **LIFESPAN:** ★★★★★ Mmmm... 16 cars in a big bowl...

63
PERCENT

FOX SPORTS NBA 2000

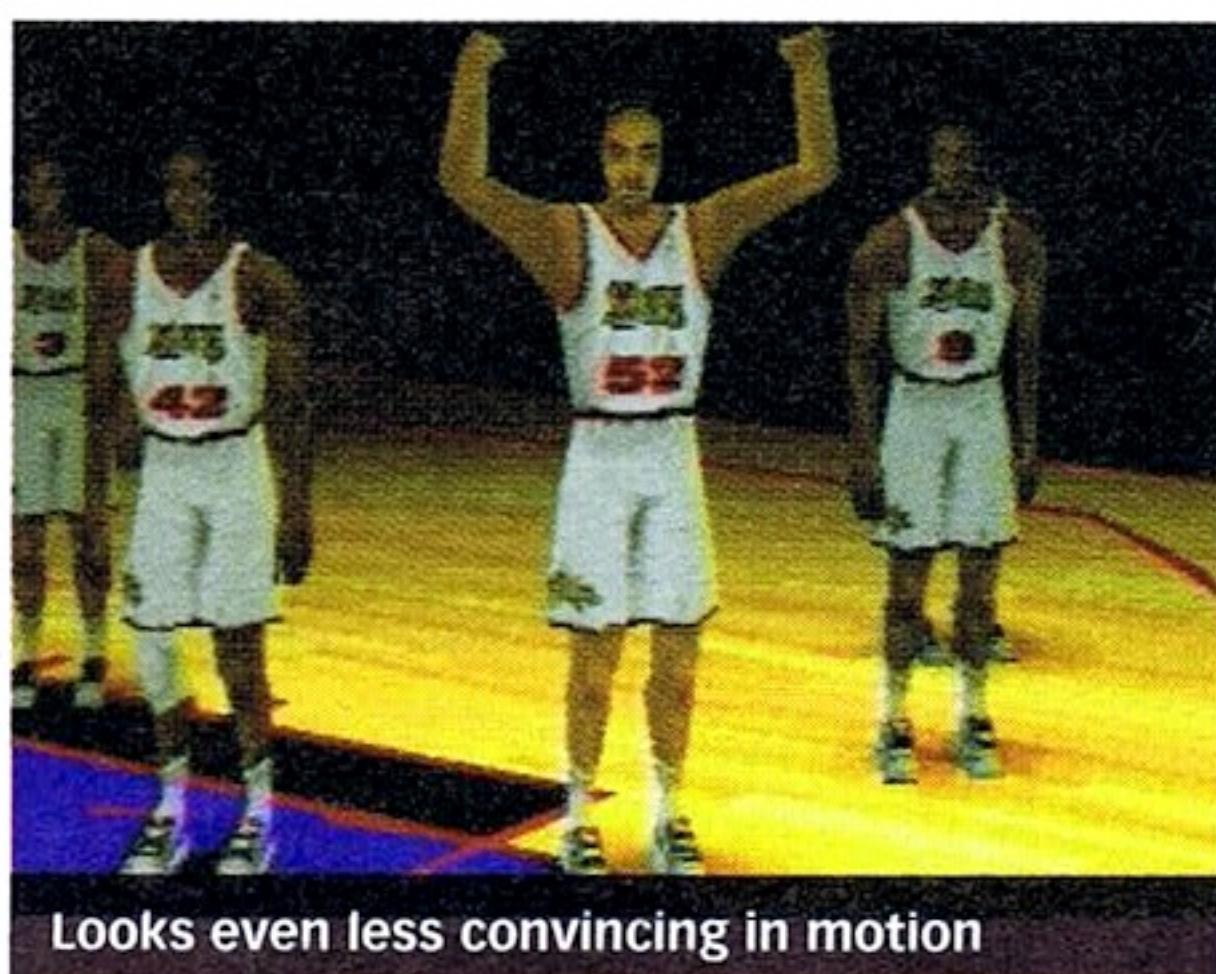
We've waited ages for this title, and we could wait a little longer too

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
Activision
- **Developer**
Radical
- **Genre**
NBA Basketball
- **Release Date**
Out Now
- **Players**
One to eight
- **No. of CD's**
One
- **Expectations**
NBA Basketball action, using FOX Sports unique broadcast style



The game's only good bit: the FMV



Looks even less convincing in motion



Basketball has always been biased towards those who can jump the highest

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible
- Multi Tap Adaptable 1-8 Players

Basketball is my life. Make no doubt about it, while some people live to play the next installment of the Final Fantasy, Tomb Raider or (shudder) Crash Bandicoot franchises, when I see that a new basketball game is just around the corner - something that happens a lot this time of year - my salivary glands start working overtime.

NBA Live 2000, NBA Pro 2000, NBA Showtime, NBA Shootout 2000 (basketball games that are all due out in the next few months) are all updates of already existing titles, but now there's a new challenger for the title of PlayStation Basketball Champion - *Fox Sports NBA 2000*. How did it go in its first season of competition? Well let's just say it failed to make the playoffs.

NBA LIVE KILLER

Fox Sports NBA 2000 is a victim of Radical's high ambitions to make this game the "NBA Live Killer". They have tried to do way too much too soon, and the poor ol' PlayStation just can't cope. And at the end of the day, the graphics and gameplay are major casualties in Radical's attempt to make a very authentic, atmospheric sporting sim.

They have poured so much effort into making this game seem just like a FOX Sports



One slam dunk coming up

telecast that they forgot that people don't watch PlayStation games - they play them.

For example, at the start of each game you get a laser-light show where the stadium lights are dimmed, the team's logo is reflected on the court using lasers, and spotlights shine around the arena, just like in the NBA. Then each player is announced, and runs out on court.

This looks pretty cool, and actually raised my anticipation level of wanting to play the game. However, once I started to try and move my sluggish players, I wished they scrapped the groovy intro and instead gave me five NBA players to use, instead of five Matt Adamsons.

Yes, each player moves like they're running in cement. It gets worse. They don't even look like they're making realistic movements. The motion capture work is simply horrible, and because the game is so big on providing a FOX Sports experience, they replay quite a few of your moves, which just accentuates this aspect of the game.

If there's one high point to *Fox Sports NBA 2000* it would be the commentary, particularly the colourful commentary of Doc Rivers (who's now the head coach of the Orlando Magic). If a player does a good move, he will give a little speech on how that player has gone the past few seasons and how he's looking to perform for the 1999/2000 NBA season. It's ear candy, sure, but it's one (and only) part of the NBA experience where Radical have totally outshone EA Sports.

A big thumbs up to Radical for trying to provide basketball fans with a top quality, atmospheric basketball sim. A big thumbs down for what they actually provided us with. Maybe if they were working with some more powerful hardware this game might have been a big winner, but as it stands, this is a rental only at best, and even then only if you're a NBA freak.

Ewan Corness

PlayStation

■ **OVERALL:** If you want basketball, wait for NBA Live 2000 or NBA Showtime.

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	Not that bad, but they've tried to do too much (and failed)
■ SOUND:	★★★★	Great commentary and the addition of FOX jingles adds realism
■ GAMEPLAY:	★	Horrid. Atari Basketball was a more realistic sim
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★	Way too easy on every difficulty level
■ LIFESPAN:	★	Once you have played through one full game... that's it

53
PERCENT

FIFA 2000

The best of the best in soccer takes the PlayStation to new heights

FACT FILE

■ **Publisher**
EA Sports

■ **Developer**
EA Sports

■ **Genre**
Soccer

■ **Release Date**
Out Now

■ **Players**
One to eight

■ **No. of CD's**
One

■ **Expectations**
Nothing but the best soccer sim on the PlayStation

Although NBA Live might be a little more flashy, AFL and Cricket World Cup have the local flavour and NHL has the "quick and easy" style, EA Sports' bread and butter has always been the FIFA series.

Hey, soccer is the most popular sport world-wide, and it has even been picking up in popularity in America, which is very important for soccer lovers - EA are an American / Canadian company, after all.

FIFA 2000 is nothing less than the best soccer game you will be playing on any system this year. The graphics have improved significantly, and of course, EA have added a few new gameplay tweaks to try and grab the owners of FIFA '99 by the bollocks and also grab the newbies to the PlayStation scene. They have succeeded.

MAXED-OUT GRAPHICS

The first aspect that will grab your bollocks is, of course, the graphics. FIFA 2000 looks better than I thought any game should look



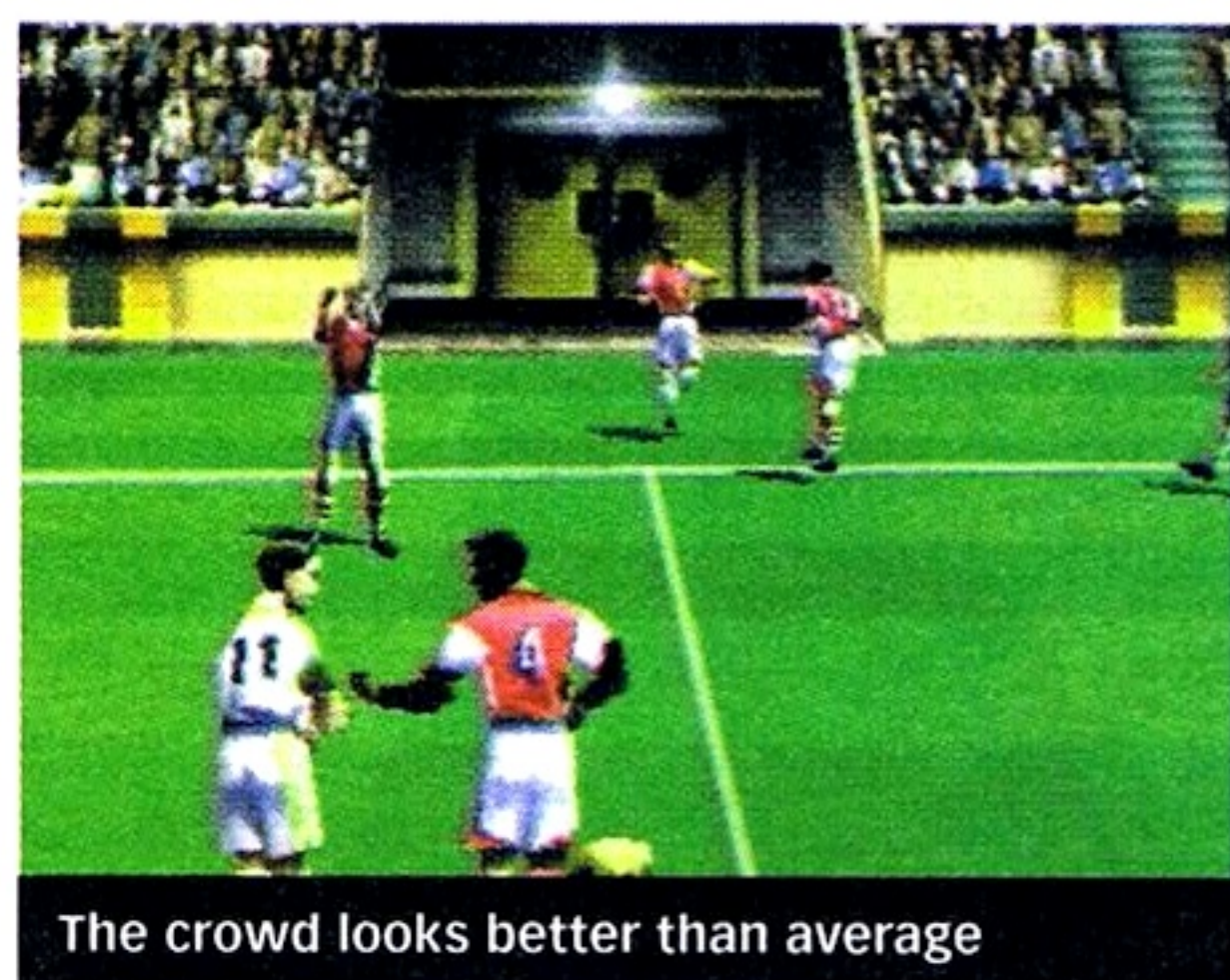
They say that all you really need to play soccer is a good pair of legs

GAME FEATURES

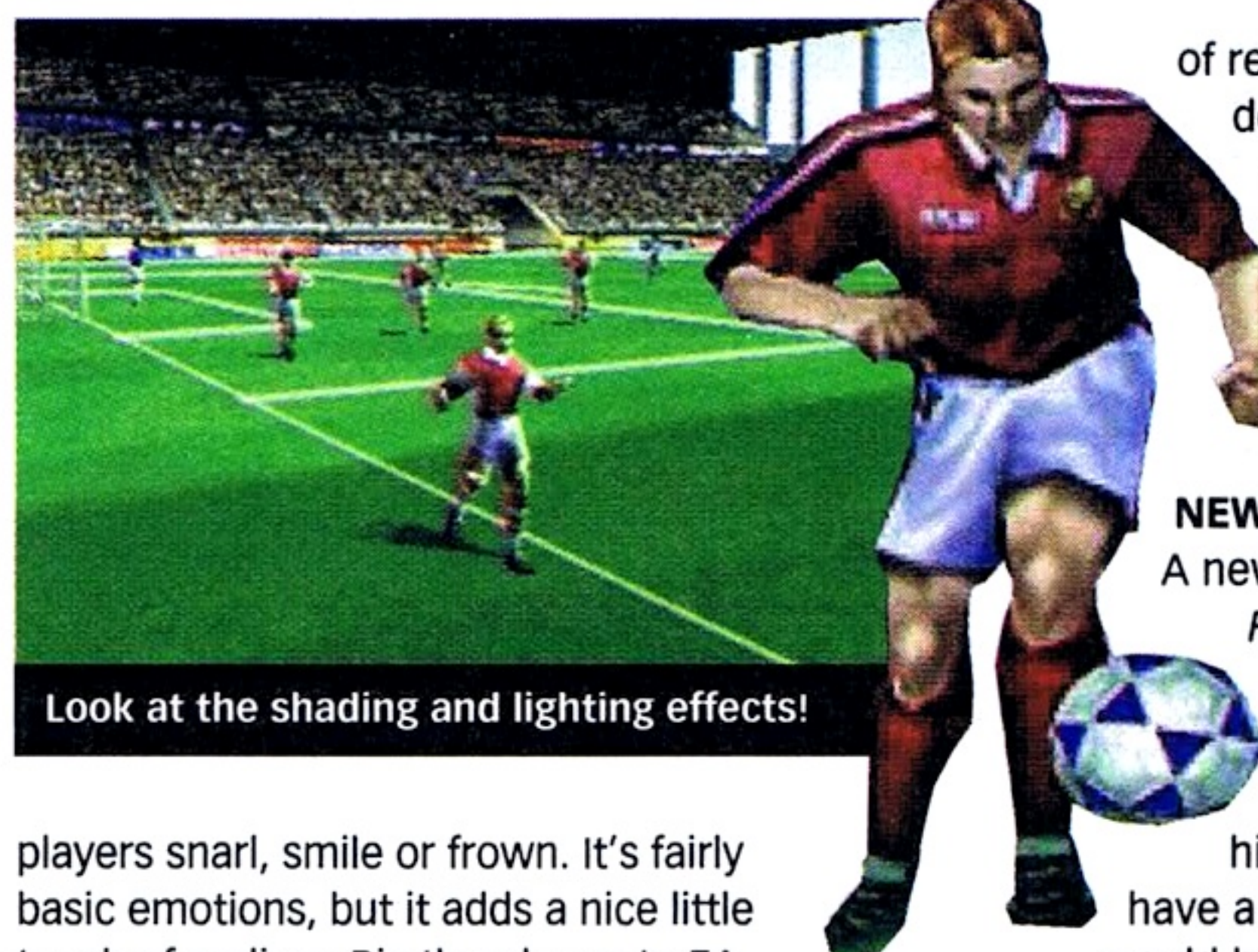
■ **Memory Card**

■ **Dual Shock Compatible**

■ **Multi Tap Adaptable 1-8 Players**



The crowd looks better than average



Look at the shading and lighting effects!

of realism. Also, offensive and defensive players interact much more realistically than in past FIFAs, with moves like contesting for the ball or tackling an opponent looking particularly sweet.

NEW FEATURES

A new feature that makes its debut in FIFA 2000 is the new passing aid.

In past versions of the game, passing to a teammate would sometimes be a little bit of a hit-and-miss affair. You would

have a fair idea of where your buddy would be off-screen, but you couldn't really be sure of it.

Now the player that you are controlling will have tiny little arrows pointing out from his feet, showing you what direction will be a safe pass, and what will be a dangerous one. A very practical idea.

Want to see sporting perfection on the PlayStation? Grab a copy of FIFA 2000. Soccer fans will be in seventh heaven over this title and fans of quality sporting sims will have this game locked in their 'Station's for months.

Ewan Corness



on the PlayStation. It's not exactly going to make Dreamcast owners turn their heads, but anyone who wants proof that the PlayStation hasn't been totally maxed-out can look at this game.

EA Sports have also added facial animations to each player, much like the feature that was introduced into NBA Live '99 where

players snarl, smile or frown. It's fairly basic emotions, but it adds a nice little touch of realism. Big thumbs up to EA for adding this feature to their FIFA series, as soccer and basketball are two sports where you can actually see the player's faces (no wussy helmets here).

Each stadium also looks fantastic, as now the grass actually looks like... grass! Sounds obvious but sometimes the ground can be the shoddiest looking part of a sports game. Not so with FIFA 2000. The motion captured moves are also very pleasing to the eye in FIFA 2000. Each player has a high level of smoothness and each move is pulled off with a high degree

PlayStation

■ **OVERALL:** If this is the last FIFA on the PlayStation, it's a great final chapter for a proud sporting franchise.

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★★★	As good as it gets for a PlayStation sporting game
■ SOUND:	★★★★	Realistic soccer sounds, sparse crowd noise
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★★★	If you can do it on a soccer field you can do it here
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★★	You had better be a damn good soccer player
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★★	Try using all 450 teams available

93

PERCENT

MUSIC 2000

Get the party started; Get it on - get a move on

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
Codemasters

■ Developer
Jester Interactive

■ Genre
Music maker

■ Release Date
Out Now

■ Players
One to four

■ No. of CD's
One

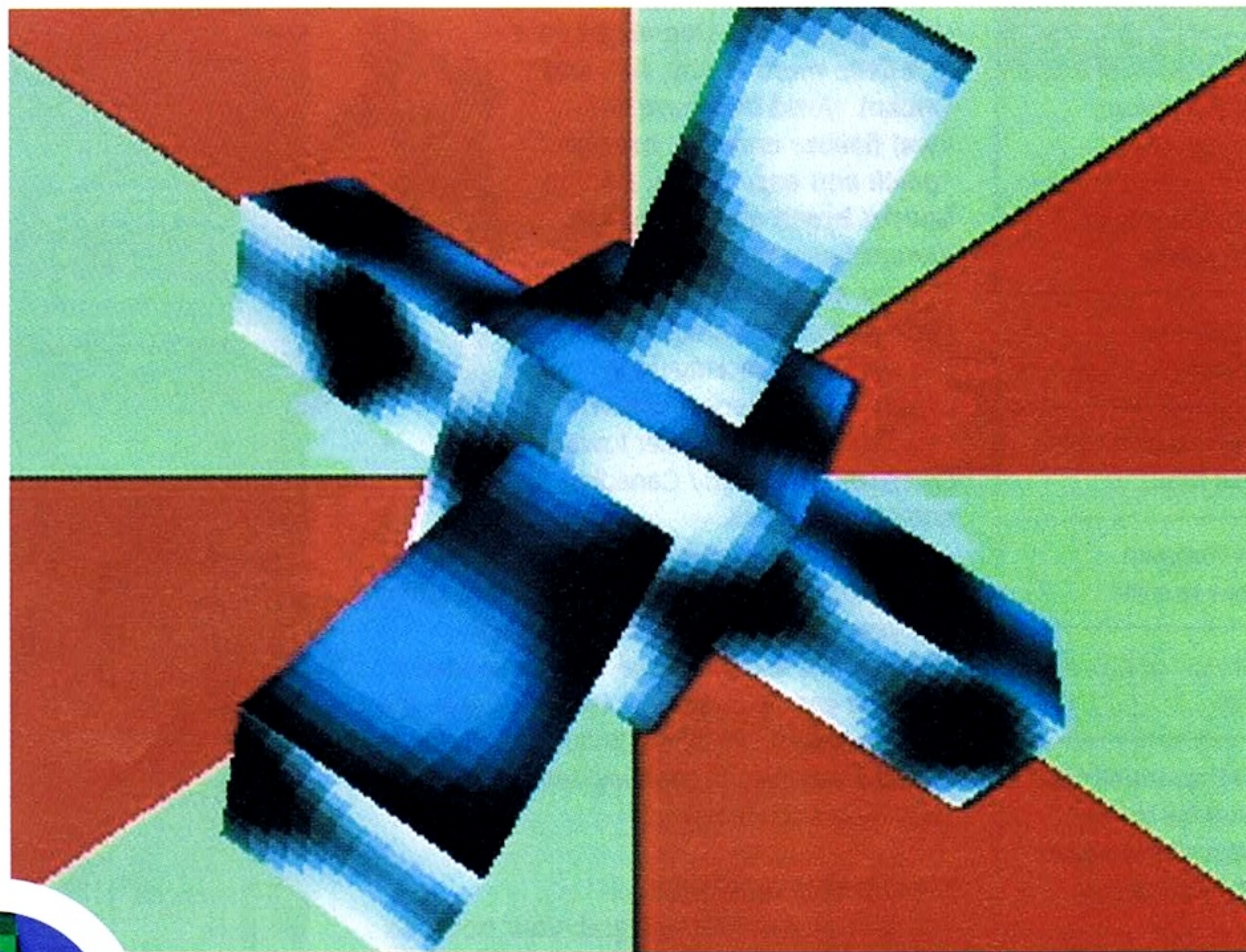
■ Expectations
Music was a hit with bedroom bangers everywhere. Music 2000 will surely revolutionise PSX composing all over again

While most would see the PlayStation merely as a games machine good for nothing but trivial interactive entertainment, it must be remembered that technically it's a digital computer that can be programmed to do anything we can think of.

The men at Codemasters thought it could make a good sequencer, and hence the program Music, and now its sequel, *Music 2000*. Both allow you to compose songs made up of musical loops and samples, generate clips to go with them and export to memory card. Music did a good job, but *Music 2000* has set out to be everything the original title was, only more so.

The screen you get when you load up *Music 2000* is quite spartan, with function definitely coming before form. It presents all the information you need to manage your track, with up to 999 bars running horizontally off the screen to the right, and up to 24 simultaneous tracks running downwards.

This is the program's improvement over the 16 tracks available in the first Music. You can build up complex melodies with only 3 or 4 tracks, so this presents the user with creative freedom, presumably only matched by one's imagination.



The new Australian flag - One nation under doof, with breakbeats and techno for all

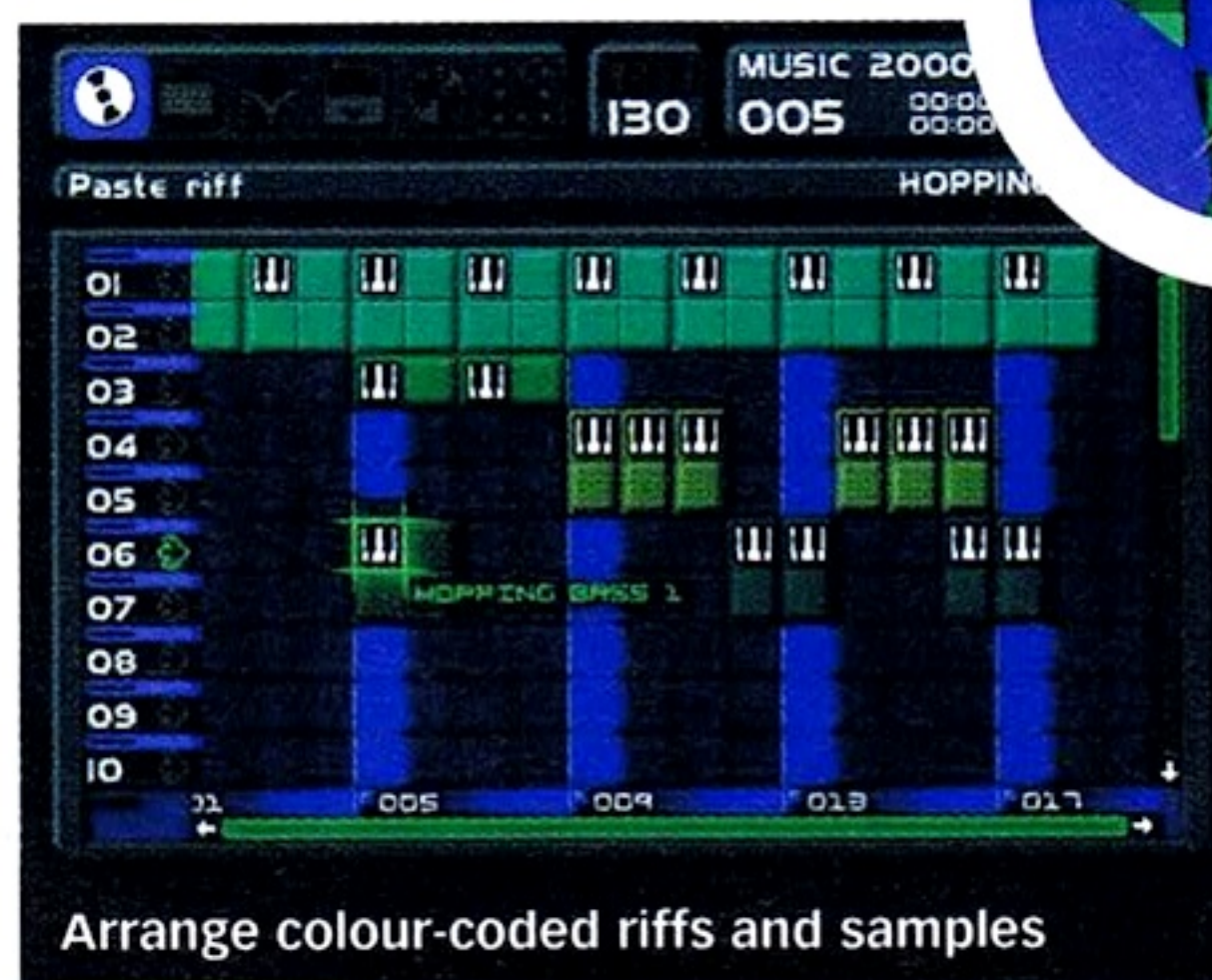
GAME FEATURES

Memory Card

Mouse Compatible

Dual Shock Compatible

Multi Tap Adaptable 1-4 Players



Arrange colour-coded riffs and samples



You get to see a preview of your clip

MUSICAL GENRES

Individual riffs are loaded into memory from a list of over a thousand on the disc, and all the main musical genres, such as techno, hip-hop, house and so forth are represented.

You also have the freedom to load in your own samples off music CDs, and manipulate their individual waveform, volume, pitch and so on. Finished tracks can be exported via the AV cables to minidisc or what have you, or saved to memory card, where a jukebox function can randomly reel them out at parties.

In the same way that individual samples are loaded into memory and then played back and manipulated, the video clip generator takes

animations and visual effects and layers them on top of each other to create kaleidoscopic patterns in time to the music.

While you can trust the programs better judgement and have the effects generated automatically, you also have the option of getting down and dirty with the mix and cutting some loops of eye candy more to your liking.

The CD player function of *Music 2000* uses the same routines, and can also be exploited to generate early-nineties video clip effects to go with any of your favourite CDs. Though in all honesty they will look out of place with anything other than Technotronic, or possibly Black Box.

MUSIC JAM

The other major addition to the Music brand is a sub-game called Music Jam. Up to four players can load up a set of samples that are assigned to the buttons on their controller, and then conspire to create tunes on the fly, accompanied by friendly on screen representations of the buttons being pressed, flashing on and off to the music as it happens.

While *Music 2000* could be interpreted as a game by the presence of the Music Jam function, it will be used primarily as an application for generating music, and comparing it to other games would be grossly unfair. The value of *Music 2000* is limited only by the proficiency you reach with it. Users of the first Music have had their works played on national radio, so the potential for true greatness is there.

While it is limited compared to the capabilities of specialised hardware, specifically in the amount of memory available, the combined cost of a PSX and the program would be about a tenth that of the corresponding "real" DJ equipment. For impoverished DJ wannabes, or just those interested in dabbling in synthetic composition, *Music 2000* represents unprecedented value.

James Cottee

PlayStation

■ **OVERALL:** The best music sequencing application available on the PlayStation. First class disco action.

Due to the fact that this "game" is actually more of an application, we have decided not to award it the usual set of stars for Graphics, Difficulty and so forth. Of course, it would get the full five stars in the Sound department, and the implementation of the graphics in the video clip generator are superb, but it is no mere game. This is a program designed to produce a tangible result, and it should be judged on its ability to meet that goal. Which it does.

96
PERCENT

DREAMCAST - PLAYSTATION - N64 - PC - GAME BOY

HYPER »



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FACT FILE

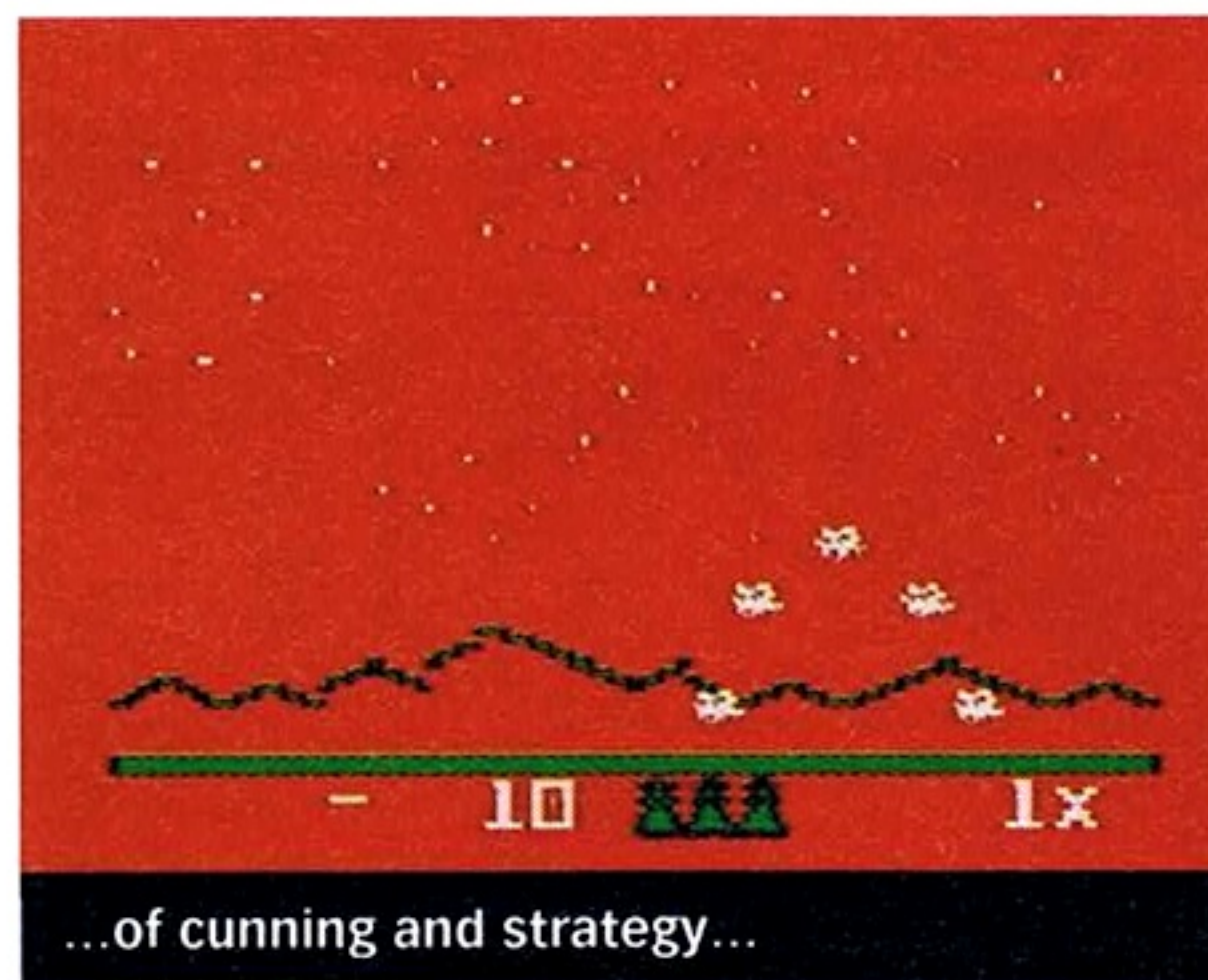
- Publisher
Activision
- Developer
Livesay Technologies
- Genre
Retro
- Release Date
TBA
- Players
One or two
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
A bumper collection of blocky games for fans of Intellivision

GAME FEATURES

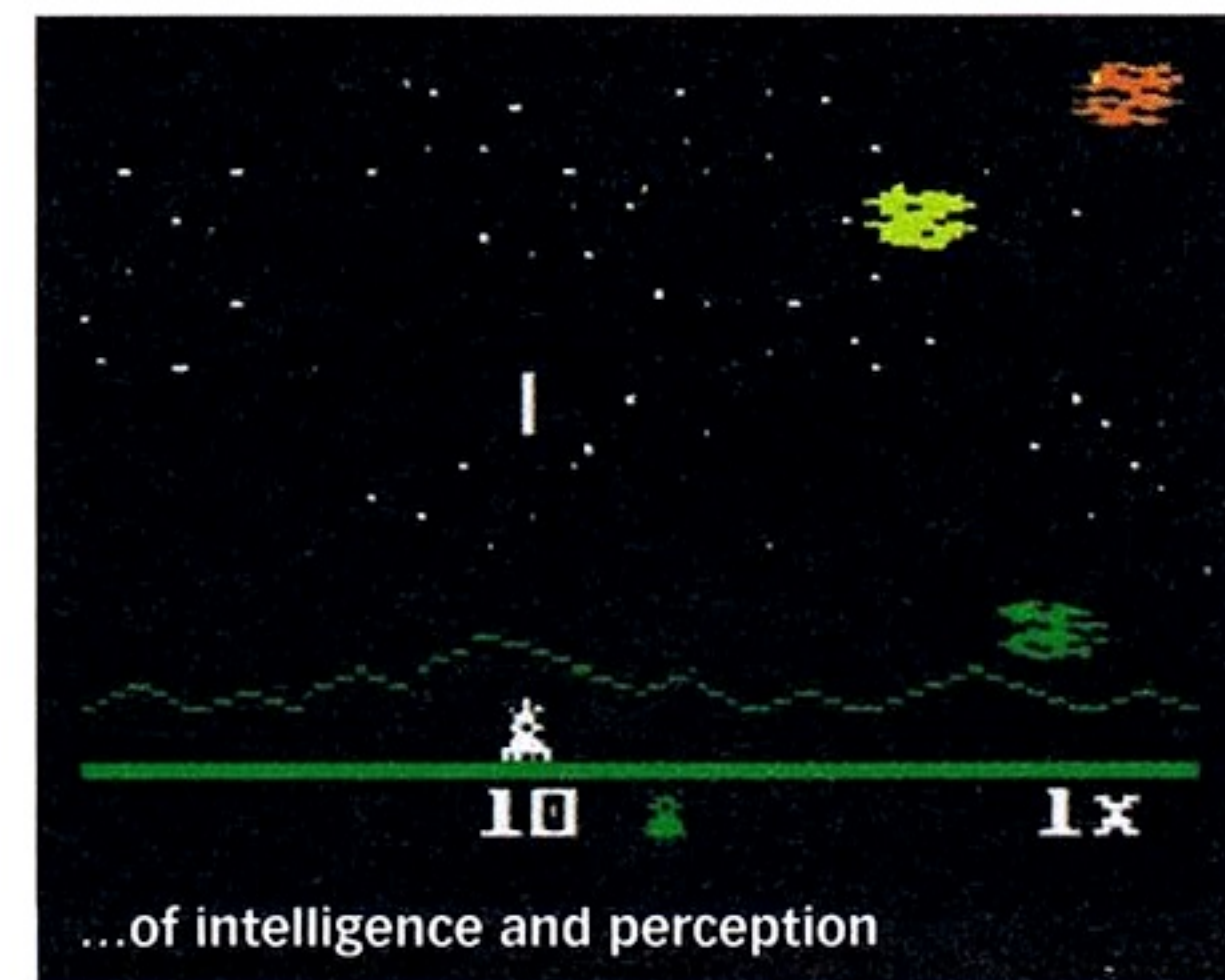
- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible



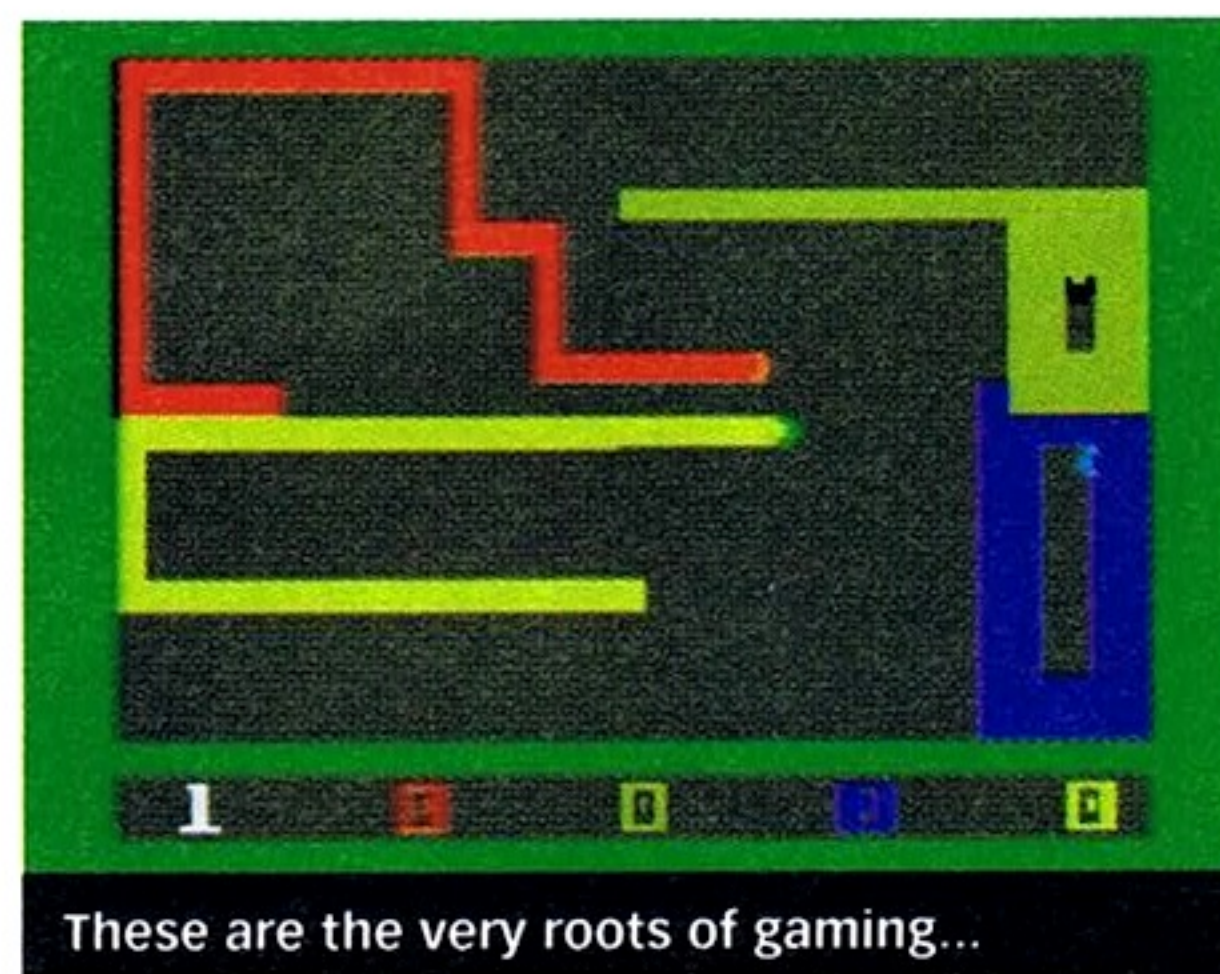
Games of skill and deduction...



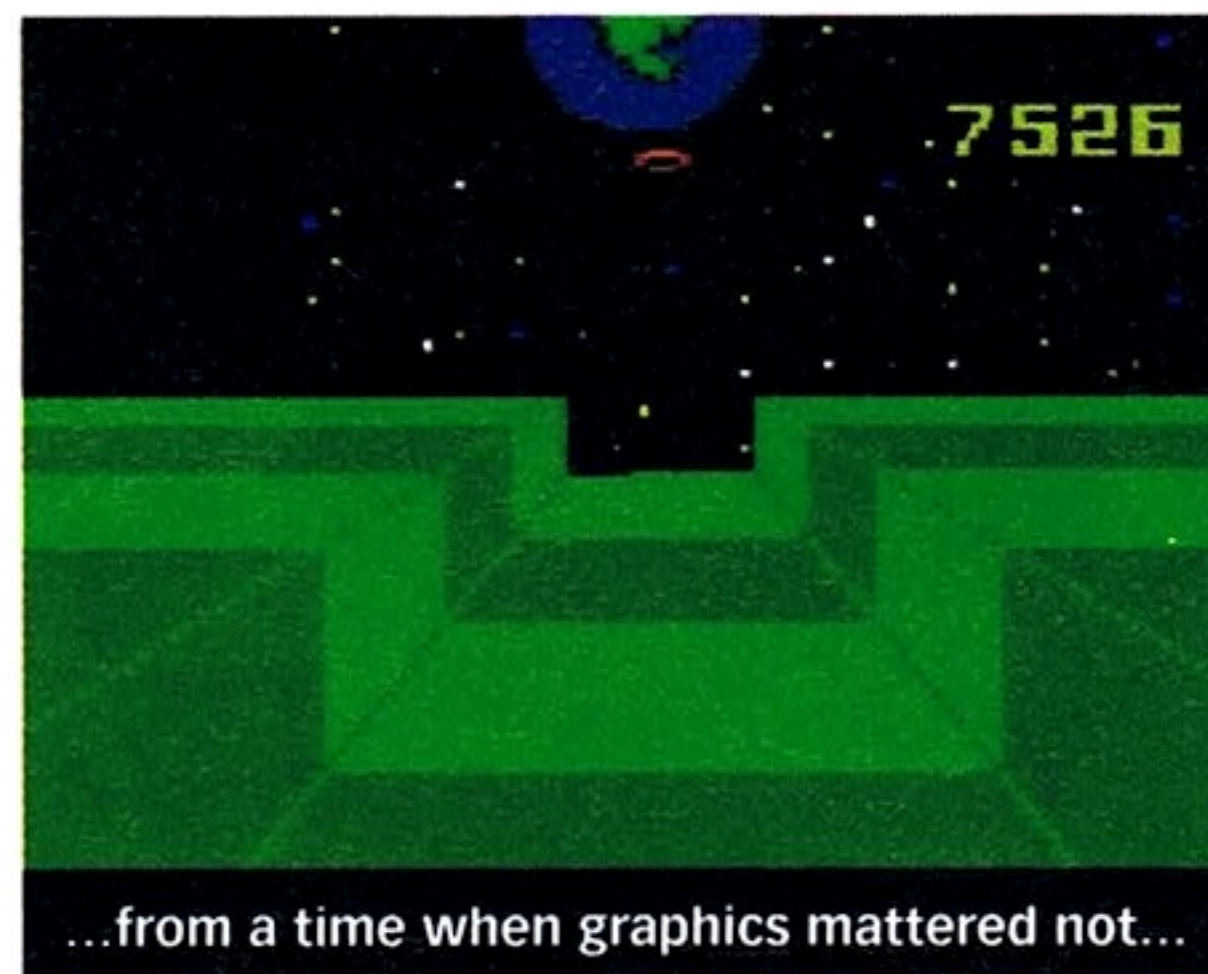
...of cunning and strategy...



...of intelligence and perception



These are the very roots of gaming...



...from a time when graphics mattered not...



...as long as there was a maiden to rescue

When the Atari 2600 ruled over the domain of home video gaming in the early eighties, there was a swarm of other consoles which rode in its wake. TV game systems like the Colecovision and the Spectravideo, which while they may have delivered superior graphics and sound to the norm, were doomed by their obscurity in the shadow of the Atari juggernaut.

The most beloved of these doomed systems was the *Intellivision*, a versatile machine that delivered, for its time, amazing graphics and sound, even voice synthesis. Activision, one of the developers for the ancient system, have used their exclusive property rights to the games they made to bring out a collection of the finest *Intellivision* games available, making this the biggest yet retro compilation for PlayStation.

FROM THE HYPNOTIC TO THE MORONIC

With a whopping 30 games included in the collection, the law of averages suggests that at least one of them will have that addictive, compulsive, certain something that forces you to play it for hours on end. This one stand-out game is *Astro Smash*, which is a cross between *Space Invaders* and *Asteroids*. Scrolling left and right at the bottom of the screen, you must shoot the asteroids hurtling to Earth. Larger

rocks split into smaller, equally dangerous ones when shot and every one you miss subtracts from your score what you would have earned if you hit it.

A quick survey of the names of the other 29 titles reveals that in the early days of game development, coming up with an inventive name wasn't a high priority, as solitary monikers like "*Chess*", "*Hockey*", "*Skiing*" and "*Soccer*" hadn't even been used yet.

While many of the games in the collection can boast two player modes, this versatility is lessened by said games having no one player modes. That is, playing games like *Tennis* and *Armor Battle* by yourself will be of limited appeal, considering it's impossible to lose.

But perhaps the biggest bone to pick with *Intellivision Classics* lies in the translation of the systems controller. This complex device incorporated a numeric keypad, among other obtuse buttons, and the Sony controllers have nowhere near enough buttons to cover them all.

Some titles in the collection overcome this by allocating virtual buttons to pairs of buttons pressed together, say, the □ and △ buttons at the same time. But some games are so involved that they force you to call up a picture of the control unit and navigate a cursor over its fake buttons just for the effect of a single keystroke.

PALLID INTERVIEWS

As an added feature to the collection, there are a number of short face-to-camera interviews with some of the programmers responsible for creating these pioneering titles. Twenty years on, these bearded, wild-haired Californians speak of their Termite Terrace-like work environment, and help put this collection in a broader historical context.

Like all of the other retro collections that have swarmed on to the shelves in the very recent past, the value of *Intellivision Classics* compared to other games that have been specifically designed to run on the PlayStation is rather questionable.

By presenting some 30 different games that are spread across every category presents good value only if you are willing to appreciate their primitive, blocky nature.

Even a true *Intellivision* enthusiast may feel let down by the clumsy implementation of the systems controller, and the fact that more popular games for the system like *Dracula* and *Ten Pin Bowling* were passed over in favour of cheesy card games. The very nature of this product will either attract or repel the consumer, and any prospective buyer should think long and hard about this one.

James Cottee

PlayStation

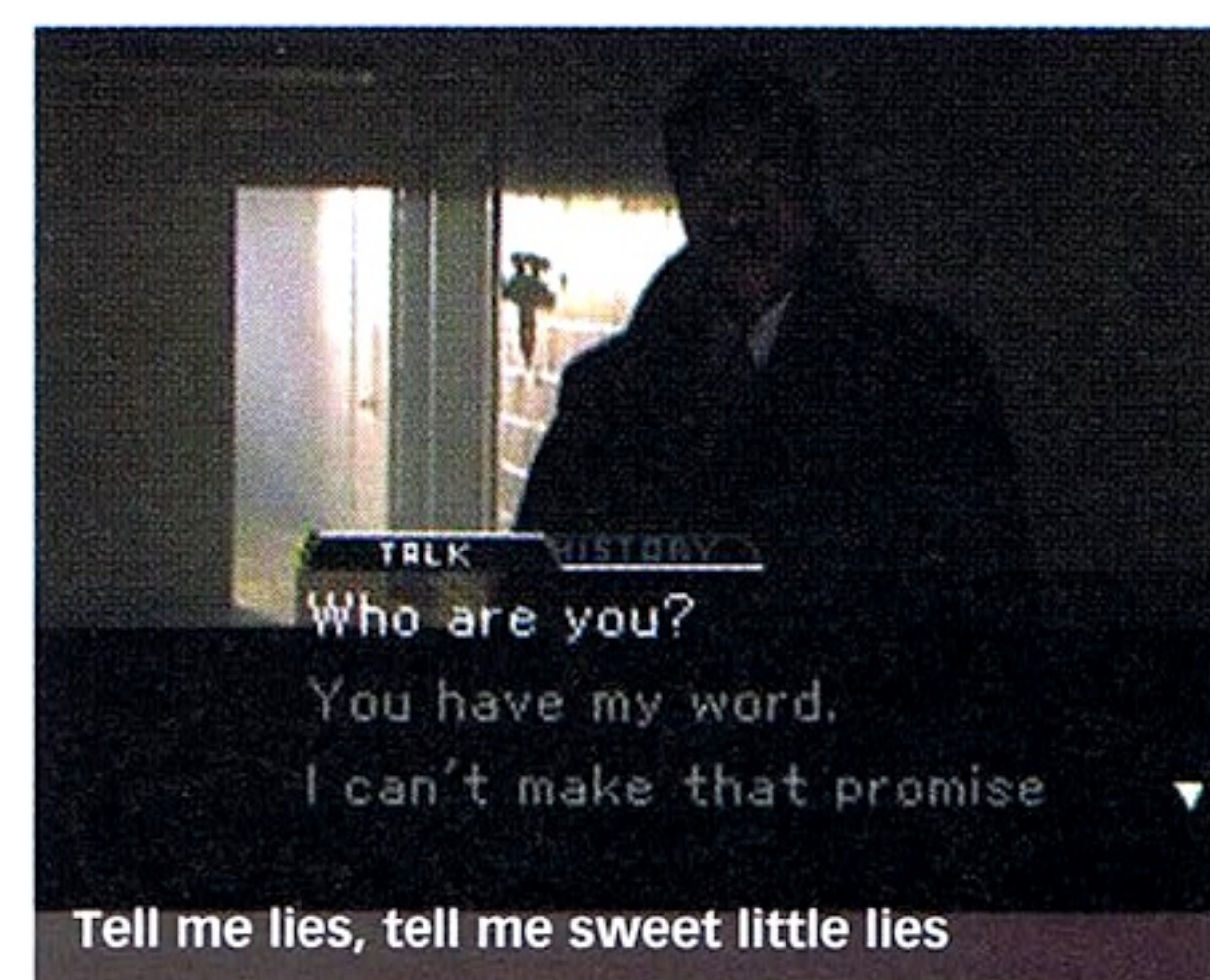
■ OVERALL: The most ambitious retro collection to date, but confined in its appeal to Intellivision aficionados.

■ GRAPHICS:	★★	Although reproduced perfectly, their blockiness is unconcealable
■ SOUND:	★★	Also reproduced perfectly, but again limited
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★	The strongest point of the collection, by a narrow margin
■ DIFFICULTY:	★	Selectable, starting on dead as a doornail easy
■ LIFESPAN:	★★	The non-fanatic will tire of it in a single evening

72
PERCENT

X-FILES

This game is out there...

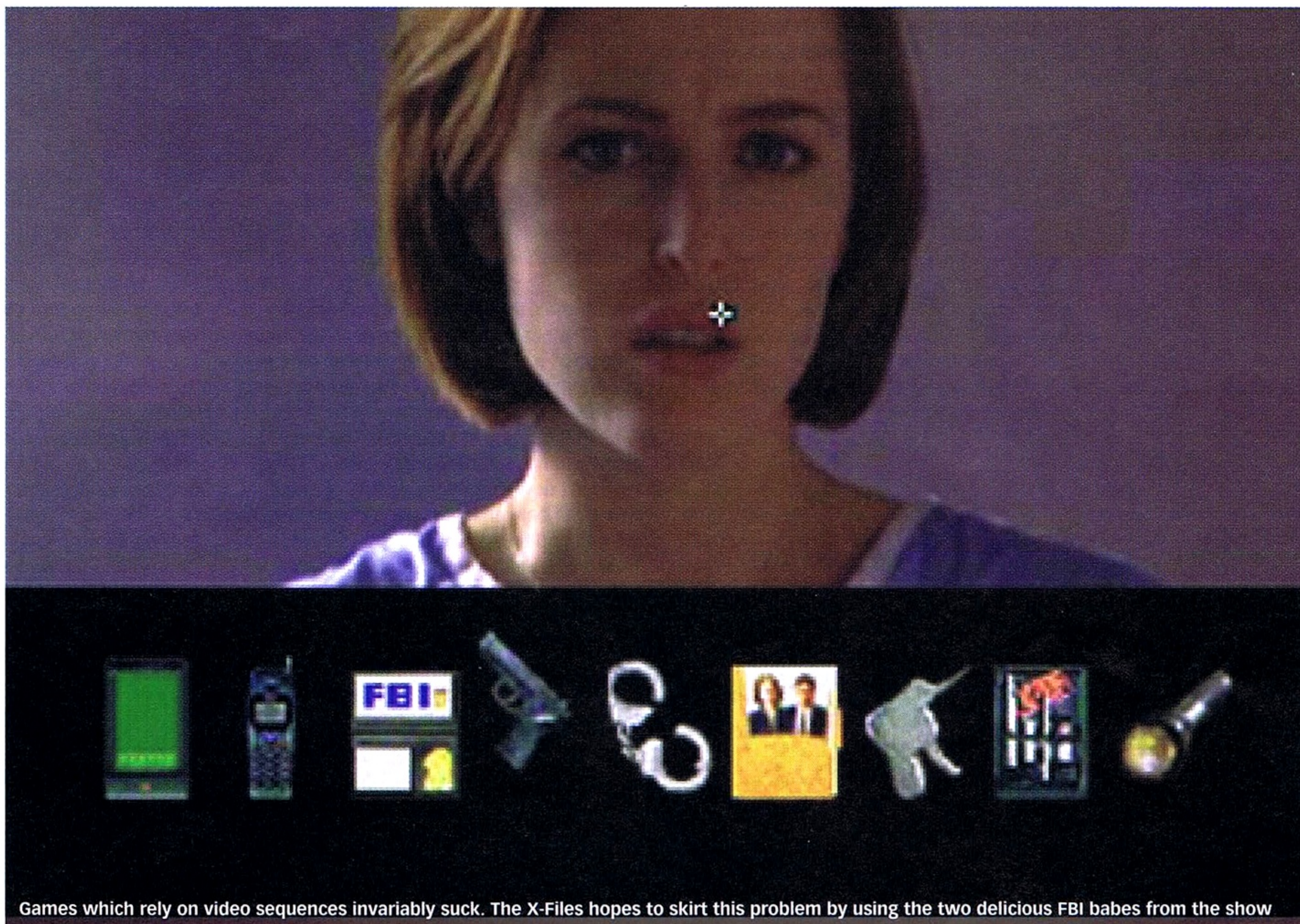


FACT FILE

- Publisher
Fox Interactive
- Developer
Hyperbole Studios
- Genre
Action/Adventure
- Release Date
TBA
- Players
One
- No. of CD's
Four
- Expectations
A highly anticipated translation of the cult series

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible



Despite a recent wane in popularity, largely due to a film that revealed every secret integral to the series subsequently destroying the key component of apprehension of the unknown, the *X-Files* game is arriving on the PSX.

Unfortunately, it has left its run a little too late. When releasing a videogame that has been translated from another medium it is imperative that the source is still in its prime. Not only has the all-revealing film diminished the fascination of the *X-Files*, but the show has also reached its conclusion.

LET THE CAMERAS ROLL

The first glaring omission that strikes you as the game starts is that you are not able to control either Mulder or Scully. Rather, you adopt the role of Agent Craig Willmore, a character who has been invented for the purposes of the

game. Throughout the storyline, however, you do interact with Mulder and Scully, as well as a throng of other *X-Files* characters such as Assistant Director Skinner, the Smoking Man, Melvin Frohike, Ringo Langly, the Lone Gunman, Special Agent Daniel Pendrell, the elusive Mr X and more.

Through the interviewing of witnesses, the accumulation of information and keen crime-solving abilities, the four-disc story, created by *X-Files* creator Chris Carter, will unravel.

IN-GAME CONTROLS

For anyone who ever participated in the phenomenon that was Sierra, picking up *X-Files* will not be much of a task. In-game control is reliant on the point and click method, which makes the purchase of a mouse a very worthwhile investment. The presentation of the game is extremely good. The interfaces are

well designed and playing the game is very much like watching an actual show. Unlike most interactive video game experiences, the audio-visual quality of *X-Files* is superb.

Using a new technique called Virtual Cinema, the film is streamed in a fashion that extinguishes the grainy and blurred appearance that is usually associated with real time video on the PlayStation.

Last but not least, the acting in *The X-Files* is actually very good. Until now, the PlayStation hasn't known the meaning of the term.

X-Files will undoubtedly appeal to those with an inquisitive nature and a zeal for games in this specific style. Those after a quick fix of excitement however, will spend a long time waiting for it. The game has a tendency to drone on, but if the effort is made, then it has the opportunity to be very fulfilling.

Keith Talent

PlayStation

■ **OVERALL:** An excellent translation of the show, but not for the easily discouraged.

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Unprecedented video clarity
■ SOUND:	★★★★	Suspenseful tunes and X-Files themes
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★	Requires a lot of patience
■ DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Very time-consuming and often trying
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★★	Four discs, enough said

81
PERCENT

MEDIEVIL

Aside from the promotion of bad spelling, this game is all about fun

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
Sony

■ Developer
SCEE Cambridge

■ Genre
3D platform action

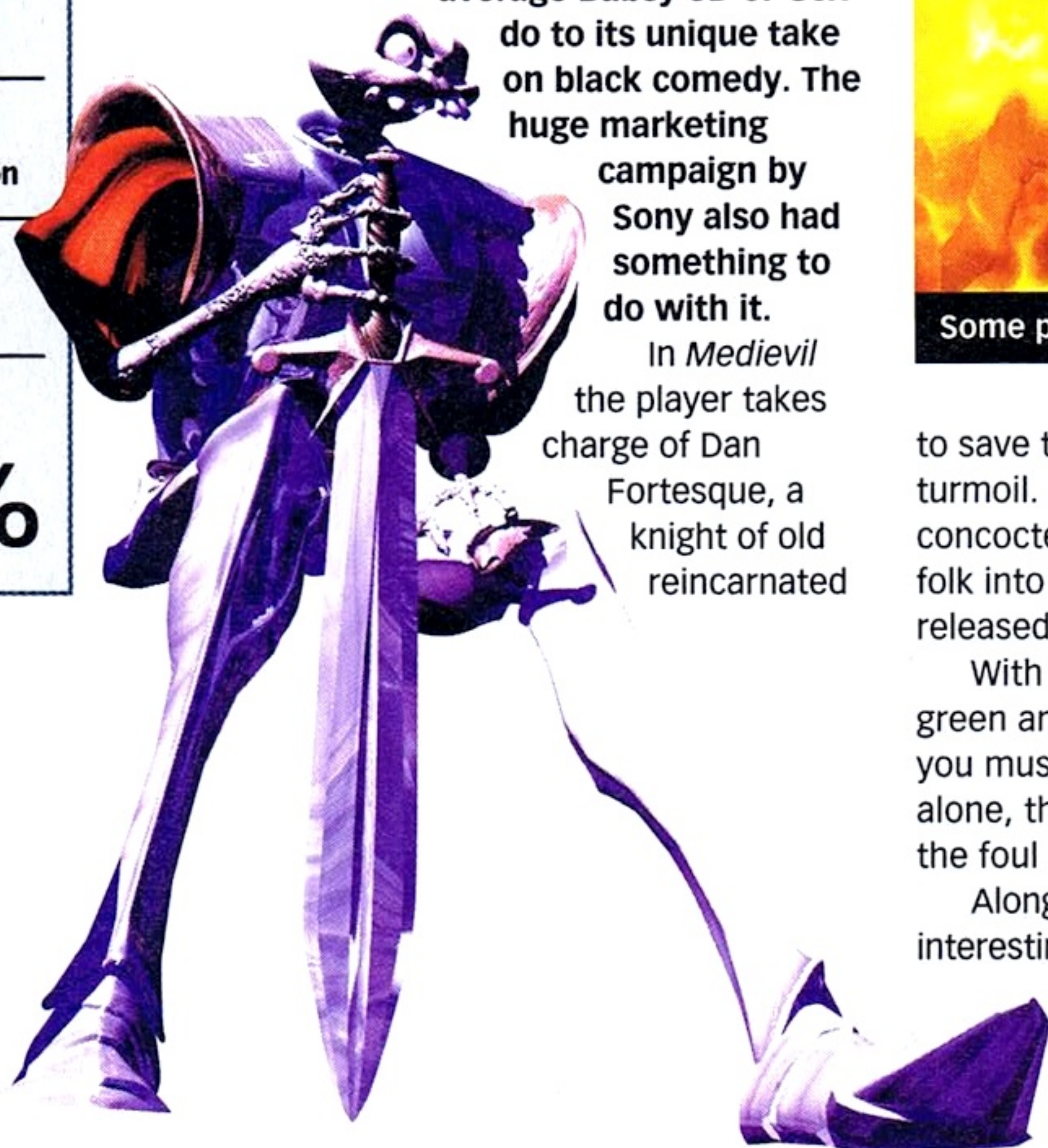
■ Price
\$39.95

■ Score
89%

Medievil was released when 3D platformers had just started to take off, so the market was already choking with action/adventure quest games. However, this unassuming little game survived better than your

average Bubsy 3D or Gex do to its unique take on black comedy. The huge marketing campaign by Sony also had something to do with it.

In *Medievil* the player takes charge of Dan Fortesque, a knight of old reincarnated



Some promotional rendering for you



Large friendly environments won't scare you

to save the people of his land in times of turmoil. Mordock, an evil arch-sorcerer, has concocted a green mist which turns ordinary folk into zombies who walk funny, and he has released it unto the land.

With everyone appearing a pale grey-green and in a dissatisfyingly undead state, you must now scour the infected realms alone, the only one with any immunity against the foul and tainted mist.

Along the way you will find many interesting weapons, reluctantly handed down to you by your old (and also dead) colleagues of the Table. The dark

humour abounds in these cut-scenes in between levels, when each of your noble knight chums have a go at you, expressing with no subtlety their disappointment at the choice of hero for this particular crisis.

Medievil plays just like any other 3D platform game but with a strong sense of humour: even the way the zombies walk is hilarious. There are definitely enough levels, spells and weapons to keep you idly entertained for weeks. If you are a fan of the free-roaming genre and you somehow missed out on *Medievil*, go out and find a copy today. It's cheap!

TENCHU: STEALTH ASSASSINS

Sneak in the soft-soled slippers of a professional killer in feudal Japan

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
Activision

■ Developer
Acquire

■ Genre
Covert action

■ Price
\$49.95

■ Score
93%



The not-so-subtle method: grenades



Ayame awaits. Soon that demon will be dead

Tenchu: Stealth Assassins is one of those rare gems, like *Tony Hawk Skateboarding* or *GTA*, that can be played without much purpose. You can choose to play as Rikimaru, a big man with a big sword, or as Ayame, a small girl with two small swords. It plays a bit like the *Tomb Raider* series, but the ninja that you will control are adept and proficient at all their arts.

As a furtive ninja in feudal Japan, your objectives range from killing all the invading pirates in town to retrieving a rare herb to save princess Kiku's life. The essential element in the Stealth button, used to crouch

and hide behind walls. The idea is to sneak up on your enemies so that you can kill them easily with little retaliation.

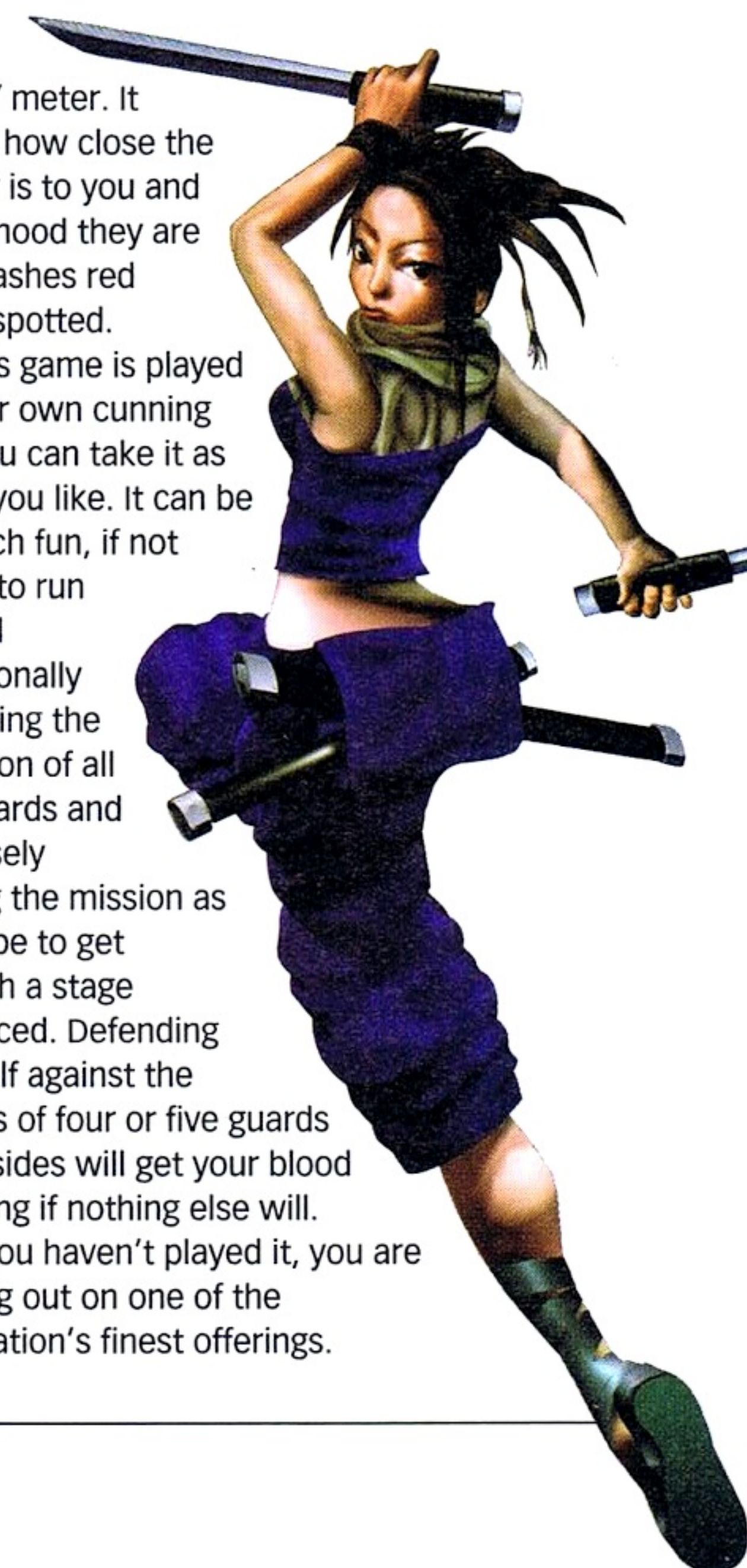
The main emphasis of the game is to remain unseen by the inhabitants of whatever compound you are trying to penetrate. To help you succeed you have many useful jumps and, among other things, a grappling hook that lets you get up into trees or onto rooftops. Other helpful items include armour, throwing blades, poisoned rice, decoy dolls, sleeping potion, mines, grenades, caltraps and health potion.

You are able to measure the awareness of any guard within your field of vision by way of

the 'Ki' meter. It shows how close the enemy is to you and what mood they are in. It flashes red when spotted.

This game is played by your own cunning and you can take it as far as you like. It can be as much fun, if not more, to run around intentionally attracting the attention of all the guards and purposely ruining the mission as it can be to get through a stage unnoticed. Defending yourself against the attacks of four or five guards on all sides will get your blood pumping if nothing else will.

If you haven't played it, you are missing out on one of the PlayStation's finest offerings.



PLAYSTATION RELEASE SCHEDULE

WHAT'S HOT AND WHAT'S DECIDEDLY LUKEWARM SHALL ALL APPEAR IN OUR COMPREHENSIVE RELEASE SCHEDULE

GAME TITLE	DEVELOPER	DISTRIBUTOR	RELEASE
Amerzone	-	Jack Of All Games	Dec 99
Baldur's Gate	-	Interplay	Dec 99
Barbie Race and Ride	Mattel	Sony	Dec 99
Commandos 2	Eidos	Ozisoft	Dec 99
Crash Team Racing	Naughty Dog	Sony	Dec 99
Discworld Noir	-	GT Interactive	Dec 99
Disney's Magical Tetris	Disney	Sony	Dec 99
Dragon Valor	Namco	Sony	Dec 99
Earthworm Jim 3D	-	Interplay	Dec 99
Fear Factor	Eidos	Ozisoft	Dec 99
Fox NBA Basketball 2000	-	Activision	Dec 99
Fox NHL Champion 2000	-	Activision	Dec 99
Jet Moto 3	Rage	Sony	Dec 99
Motor Racing (Working Title)	Empire	Metro	Dec 99
Muppets Racing	Sony	Sony	Dec 99
Official F1 Racing - 99 Season	Eidos	Ozisoft	Dec 99
Space Debris	Rage	Sony	Dec 99
South Park Luv Shack	-	Acclaim	Dec 99
South Park Rally	-	Acclaim	Dec 99
Toy Story 2	Activision	Activision	Dec 99
Spiderman	Activision	Activision	Summer 00
Tenchu 2	Activision	Activision	Summer 00
Tiger/PGA Tour 2000	EA SPORTS	EA	14 Jan 00
Road Rash Jailbreak	EA	EA	18 Jan 00
World Cricket 2000	EA Sports	EA	21 Jan 00
Alien Resurrection	Fox	EA	28 Jan 00
Colony Wars: Red Sun	Psygnosis	Sony	Jan 00
Darkstone	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Jan 00
Die Hard 2	Fox	EA	Jan 00
Destruction Derby 3	Psygnosis	Sony	Jan 00
F1: World Grand Prix '99	Ubi Soft	Ubi Soft	Jan 00
Martian Gothic: Unification	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Jan 00
Railroad Tycoon II	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Jan 00
Resident Evil 3	Capcom	Ozisoft	Jan 00
Rollcage Extreme	Psygnosis	Sony	Jan 00
Space Station Silicon Valley	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Jan 00
Thrasher: Skate and Destroy	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Jan 00
Spec Ops	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Jan 00
Supercross 2000	EA Sports	EA	Jan 00
Vigilante 8: Second Offense	Activision	Activision	Jan 00
Theme Park World	Bullfrog	EA	8 Feb 00
Grandia	GameArts	Ubi Soft	Feb 00
Mike Stewart's Bodyboarding	Midas	Metro	Feb 00
X-Men	Activision	Activision	Feb 00
Dune 2000	Westwood	EA	Feb 00
Unreal	Epic	GT Interactive	Feb 00
NuWrestling 1	-	Acclaim	Feb 00
Vanishing Point	-	Acclaim	Feb 00
Messiah	-	Interplay	Feb 00
Armorines: Project S.W.A.R.M.	-	Acclaim	Oct 99
Rugby 2000	EA SPORTS	EA	15 Mar 00
Civilization: Call To Power	Activision	Activision	Mar 00
GTA: Berlin Mission Pack	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Mar 00
Karting World Championship	Midas	Metro	Mar 00
State Of Emergency	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Mar 00
Star Wars: Obi Wan	Lucasarts	Metro	Mar 00
Duke Nukem: Time To Kill2	-	GT Interactive	Mar 00
F1 Racing Championship	-	Jack Of All Games	Mar 00
Rayman 2	Ubi Soft	Jack Of All Games	Mar 00
Eagle One	Infogrames	Ozisoft	Q1 2000
Ronaldo V-Football	Infogrames	Ozisoft	Q1 2000
Airport Inc.	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Apr 00
Kiss	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Apr 00
Joe Blow	-	Jack Of All Games	Apr 00
Spiderman	-	Activision	Apr 00
Prince Of Persia	Red Orb	Dataflow	2000

PREPLAY CONTENTS



74 Resident Evil 3

The third installment on PlayStation of the sinister, zombie-centric events that have befallen Raccoon City. You must guide Jill Valentine as she attempts to escape the undead scourge that has affected her particular patch of middle America.



76 Dew Prism

The genre that's loosely been known as "action RPG" has always been dominated by Nintendo's Zelda titles. Whilst Brave Fencer Musashi was overlooked for a Western release, Square's follow-up title looks like it will be even better.



77 Gran Turismo 2

The most realistic racer on the PlayStation has now brought about the inevitable sequel. What new features does it offer? How many new cars? What new features have been included to extrapolate on the success of Gran Turismo 1? Get ready to find out.



78 Suikoden 2

The sequel to one of the PlayStation's most innovative and huge pioneer RPGs, Suikoden 2 expands upon its original ideas of amassing an army, using beautiful old-fashioned 2D graphics



79 Thousand Arms

Developed by Atlus, the company responsible for many a great RPG like Legend of Kartia, Thousand Arms is an RPG that also packs in a dating simulation engine as a bonus. You literally go out and date the girls in the game! Conservatives among you should have no fear: our hero has nothing but noble intentions.

Resident Evil 3: Nemesis

Capcom save their most horrific evils for the third and final installment

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
Eidos

■ Developer
Capcom

■ Genre
Survival horror

■ Release Date
February

■ Players
One

PROGRESS REPORT

Positive Points

- ✦ Nastier enemies and new moves.
- ✦ Random system for your item and enemy placement.

Negative Points

- ✦ Fixed camera angle still a little awkward at times.



That there is the nemesis, lipless mouth revealing horrible teeth, and that unfortunate head clutched in his left hand belongs to Brad Vickers

Unless you have only just got your PlayStation (where have you been the last 4 years?) you're no doubt familiar with the Resident Evil series. You know, the games with the zombies?

THE NEXT CHAPTER

Now there's a new chapter in the ongoing saga of the insidious Umbrella Corp and its twisted biological experiments. Fans of the series will be happy to know that one of the major questions posed by the first two games - what happened to Jill Valentine? - is answered.

Jill's back as one of the main characters in Nemesis and her absence in RE2 is explained by the story, taking place both before and after the events that transpire in RE2. Confused? Don't be.

Players take control of Jill Valentine in the hours after her STARS team has returned from the mansion/laboratory to Raccoon City. She's on her way out of town after an unsuccessful attempt to convince the powers that be of what's really going on. But lo and behold, there's an army of zombies blocking her path.

So once again Jill has to rely on her wits (and conveniently placed firearms) to take on the zombie hordes. She makes it through half



The pools of blood we love so much return



The zombies are more closely detailed

the game before being knocked unconscious and players then take control of ex-Umbrella employee and mercenary Carlos Oliveira. Carlos has come back into town to play the hero, but he also has some other items on his agenda. Jill comes to after the events of RE2 have transpired and players resume control of her then to take the story into new territory.

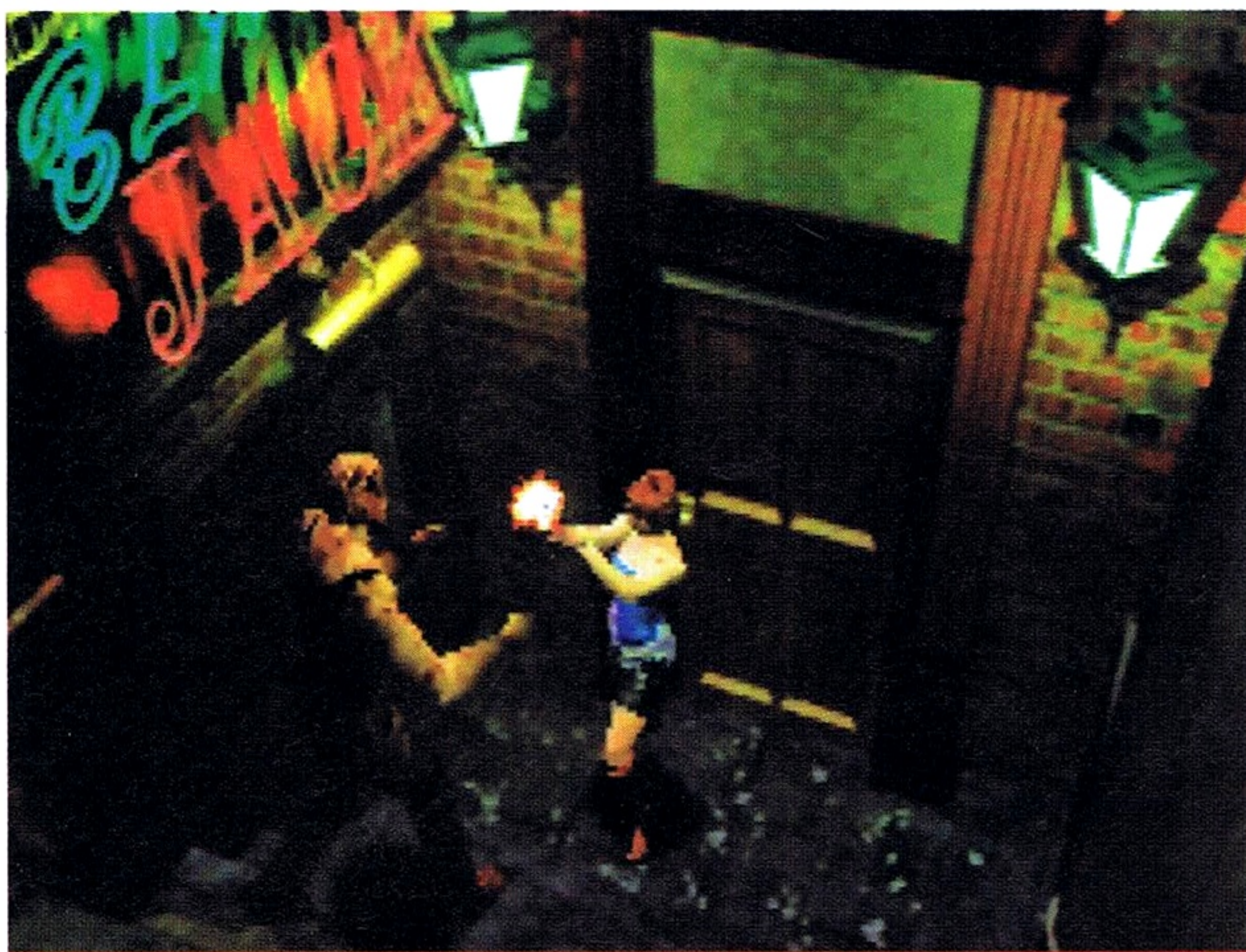
There have been some welcome modifications to the controls. Jill can now do a quick 180 degree turn, perfect for about facing when confronted with too many zombies and not enough ammo. There are also some defensive moves where players

can dodge or tackle an attacking zombie out of the way, depending on the timing and button combination.

Although Raccoon City isn't as open to exploration as the 3D town in Silent Hill, there are quite a few options and the game generally feels more open than its predecessors' room-to-room exploration.

The zombies in *Nemesis* are much nastier and come in many more flavours than ever before. Now you can actually discern the different personalities of the humans that have been transformed by Umbrella's virus. You get girl zombies and boy zombies, fat





Hey baby! Wanna dance? I know this great club! Don't shoot me, I only want... your BRAINS!!



The Police Station houses awful new foes



Lovely smoke trails

ones, skinny ones, slow ones, aggressive ones and one uber-zombie on steroids who's guaranteed to make you crap your pants every time he appears.

THE NEMESIS

The *Nemesis* of the title is a nasty piece of work. He is faster than you and has no problems chasing you from area to area - this guy's not going to be stopped by a simple load screen. He's about eight feet tall and likes to toy with you by hunting you down, picking you up and smashing you to the ground. Oh yeah, he's also got a huge rocket launcher to take pot shots at you with.

As if these zombies weren't enough, there are more mutated Umbrella experiments to contend with. Creatures like the Hunter, the Drain Deimos and the Brain Sucker each have their own special attacks, some poisonous and some just plain vicious, that will have you running scared to the nearest typewriter to save your game before they get you.

YOU'LL NEED AMMUNITION...

To help you against these numerous enemies you have a familiar range of weaponry ranging from the trusty knife through to the Magnum Smith and Wesson and a chunky mine thrower. If you're running a bit short on the required ammo and just can't find any lying around, Capcom have implemented a combining system for ammo similar to what they did with the tranquiliser darts in *Dino Crisis*.

In Raccoon City you will come across different types of gunpowder that when combined with empty reload shells will give you ammo for your various weapons.

The problem of finding ammo in *Nemesis* will be compounded by the fact that there's a random system at play meaning that items and enemies will be found in different locations in different games. This feature looks set to give *Nemesis* a replayability factor that was lacking in the first two *Resident Evil* games.

We have previewed *Resident Evil 3* from the Japanese copy (*Biohazard3 Last Escape*). The English language version is currently being developed by Eidos in the UK and there is a definite possibility that there will be some added features for the English speaking markets. *Resident Evil 3* looks like being a must buy for anyone interested in a really spine-tingling gaming experience.

Elton Cane



Dew Prism

Japan insists with the literal translation of their RPG titles

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
Squaresoft

■ Developer
Square

■ Genre
RPG

■ Release Date
TBA

■ Players
One

PROGRESS REPORT

Positive Points

★ Fun action combat system.
Loveable characters.

Negative Points

★ Fixed camera positions annoying.

D*ew Prism* is the latest from Square in a long line of RPGs and from first looks it upholds their fine tradition. Square are known for varying the style and format of each of their RPGs, giving us gamers a fresh feel each time they release something new.

Dew Prism is no different in this respect. With full 3D rendered environments and a new fast combat system, *Dew Prism* has a little more action in the gameplay while retaining certain elements of RPGing.

ONCE UPON A TIME

Dew Prism's story is based around two characters, Mint and Ruu and features both of them prominently as you play through the game. At the beginning, you are given the opportunity to choose between them and after you have made your choice, the background story plays out. Eventually, the two characters are brought together by fate and their quests lead them to work together.

The most noticeable change is the adoption of full 3D environments. Gone are the pre-rendered 2D backdrops of FF7 and FF8, instead we marvel at possibly some of the best looking 3D environments ever to be rendered on a PSX.



By keeping the graphics fairly simple, everything in the game remains crisp and clear



Vibrant and colourful...



...Dew Prism is aimed at children...



...but it can be appreciated by anyone

CAMERA ANGLES

Although the camera is usually fixed in the centre of an area, following your character as they run and jump about the place. The animation is so smooth, it's hard to believe that the PlayStation is getting old.

The texture quality is stunning with very little pixellisation. The character designs are of similar visual delight. Using the anime style, each character has unique details. Even faces are animated, so the characters blink and their eyes move.

The combat system for *Dew Prism* is completely new. On your first venture into the forest it becomes quite clear that most of the

'You aren't just limited to hand to hand techniques, there are, of course, spells and other special abilities'

action and combat in *Dew Prism* is going to be platform style where you fight it out in hand to hand in real time with numerous creatures and enemies. However, you aren't just limited to hand to hand techniques. There are, of course, spells and other special abilities.

GET TO GRIPS WITH THE CONTROLS

The controls are easy to get to grips with. The □ button is the usage button when walking around town and talking to other characters. When out in the "combat areas", it's your main attack button for quick, lethal effectiveness. The other buttons now come into play with X for jump and Δ for special ability use. ○ allows you to choose which special to use.

In Mint's case it's a selection of spells, where Ruu gets to transform into one the creatures he's defeated in battle. One thing that differs from standard RPGs is that hitpoints and mana can only be recovered by collecting potions left behind by dead creatures. There's no way to store them for later use. This makes it a little easier to die but *Dew Prism* allows you to continue instead of forcing you to restart at the cost of a bronze coin.

Dew Prism is turning out to be a fun, easy-to-get-into RPG with some frantic platforming action to boot. Already released in Japan, there are murmurs about *Dew Prism* hitting the PAL territories soon so we'll keep you informed.

Aaron Lai

Gran Turismo 2

The king of car racers takes a back seat for its own successor

FACT FILE

- Publisher
Sony
- Developer
Polyphony Digital
- Genre
Racing simulation
- Release Date
TBA
- Players
One or two

PROGRESS REPORT

Positive Points

- ★ Very similar to the original
- ★ Basically an encyclopedia of desirable cars

Negative Points

- ★ Very similar to the original
- ★ Nothing else that shouldn't be fixed before final release



White cars go slower



Yes, it does look a little bit nicer than before

Gentlemen (and ladies), start your engines! Sony's entry in the race for your holiday gaming dollar is on its way out of the pits.

The sequel to Polyphony Digital's mega-successful real driving simulation, Gran Turismo, has been plagued with optimising issues and licensing troubles for the featured cars, but now things look on track for a December/January release here in Australia.

Demo versions have been on display at international game shows and a more finished one-lap demo has been doing the rounds courtesy of a US PlayStation CD mag, and after seeing *Gran Turismo 2* in action we can tell you that, not surprisingly, it looks fantastic.

CUSTOMISE YOUR CAR

Although the graphical quality is what surprised and amazed most gamers when the original came out, it was what's under the bonnet that kept the game at the top of the charts for so long. The ability to customise your car down to the minute details, the difficult, realistic driving physics and the challenging license system are all back in this year's model.

The gameplay is essentially the same - with only some minor tweaking of control and responsiveness - so are the extras worth \$90? Well, the answer to that question depends on how much you like your cars. If you're a regular reader of magazines like *Hot 4s* and *Rotaries* and have a poster of a hotted up sportscar with a naked girl draped across the bonnet stuck on



Isn't that Lane Cove Bridge? Look! There's Birkenhead Point!

your wall, then you'll no doubt already be saving your hard earned dollars for the latest Gran Turismo. But the casual Sunday driver should wait for a full review or to see the game in action before running out to upgrade.

The extras do sound pretty enticing though. You would need a bloody big garage to accommodate the 400 cars, from automakers across the globe, featured in *Gran Turismo 2*. From 70s muscle cars and yank tanks a la *Driver* to the latest Japanese speed machines (even some not yet released), *Gran Turismo 2* provides you with plenty of choice.

The choice of venue has widened too, with 20 tracks from around the world now on offer. The track environments are where you can notice most of the graphical improvements, and again, just like *Driver*, *Gran Turismo 2* aims to faithfully recreate famous cities like Seattle and Rome.

There are now four game modes to rev your engine: GT, rally, production and sportscar racing. The rally mode is probably the biggest

change introduced into *Gran Turismo 2* and along with it comes a variation in road surfaces that will have old hands at Gran Turismo looking for new strategies as they face shifts in the way a car handles within a race.

The car handling is only a little different to the original, more an evolution than total revamp. But although the cars now respond more naturally to bumps and grinds, you still can't smash a panel or even chip the paint, no matter how bad you are at timing the slides round corners.

There's still occasional clipping and poor collision detection in certain areas of the demo versions being shown around, but this is the kind of stuff quality developers like Polyphony are guaranteed to fix before the product hits the shelves. With the legions of motorsports fans here in Australia and the high profile of the Gran Turismo franchise Polyphony are almost assured of success with their last racing game for the PlayStation.

Elton Cane

Suikoden II

A pioneer of role-playing games returns to the PlayStation

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
Konami
- **Developer**
Konami
- **Genre**
Role-playing game
- **Release Date**
TBA
- **Players**
One

PROGRESS REPORT

Positive Points

- ★ Love the graphic design and artwork
- ★ The plot is really quite involving

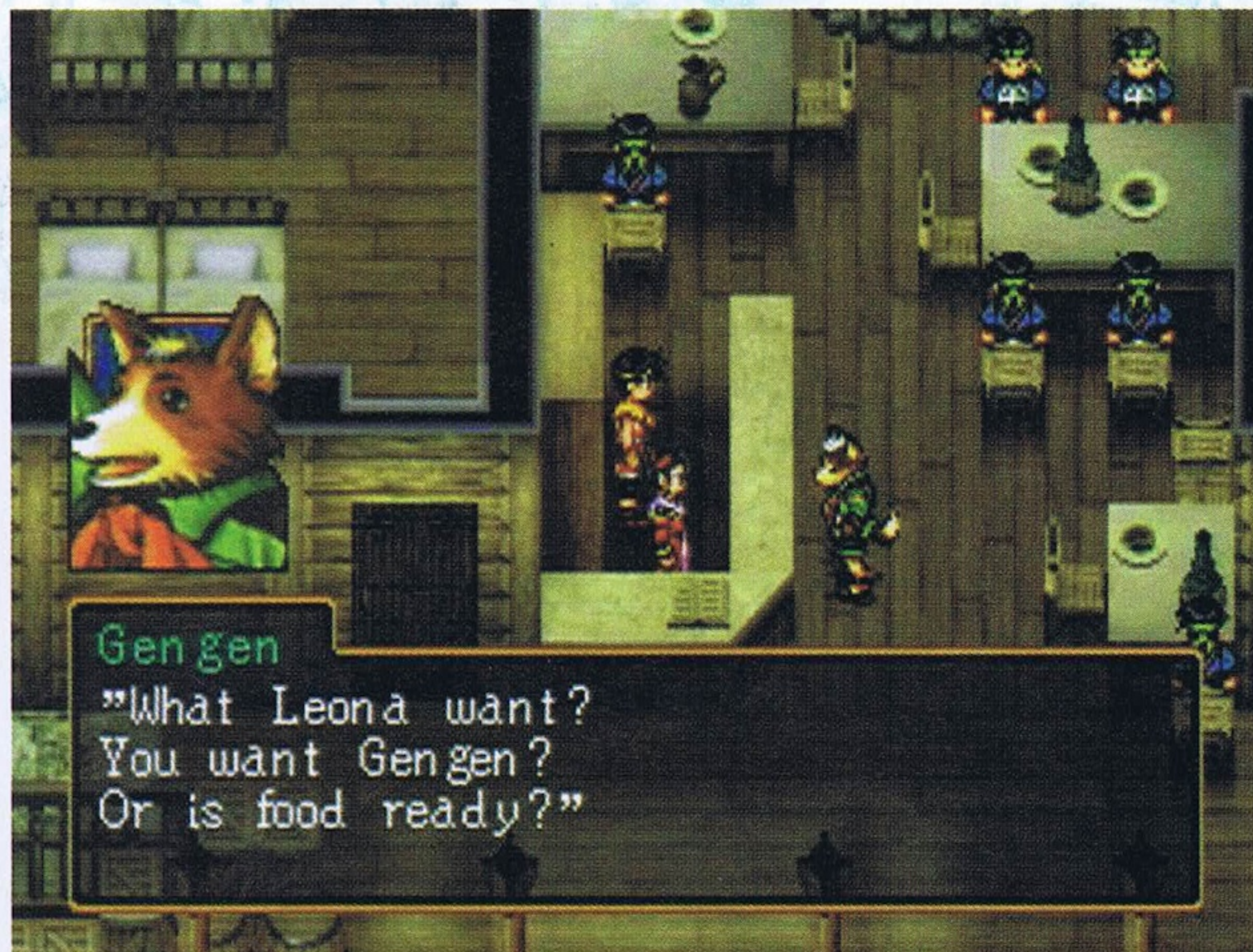
Negative Points

- ★ Has got quite old style graphics
- ★ Sometimes the battle system seems repetitive

The RPG genre has long been established as one of the most competitive realms for game developers to enter. With very few achieving anything near Final Fantasy status, the area in between is often very black and white. *Suikoden II* is Konami's latest pitch at an RPG, attempting to sustain its predecessor's acclaim while also rectifying some of its deficiencies.

The plot of *Suikoden II* is again very formulaic. The action is set several years after *Suikoden I*, where the wicked Prince Luca Blight of the Highland empire is burning and pillaging the villages of the innocent, in spite of a treaty to the contrary. Your aim is obviously to rid the land of the Highland scourge and vanquish Prince Luca. Adopting the role of a courageous, imperial rebel, you are joined throughout the game by a multitude of other personalities who aid you in your quest.

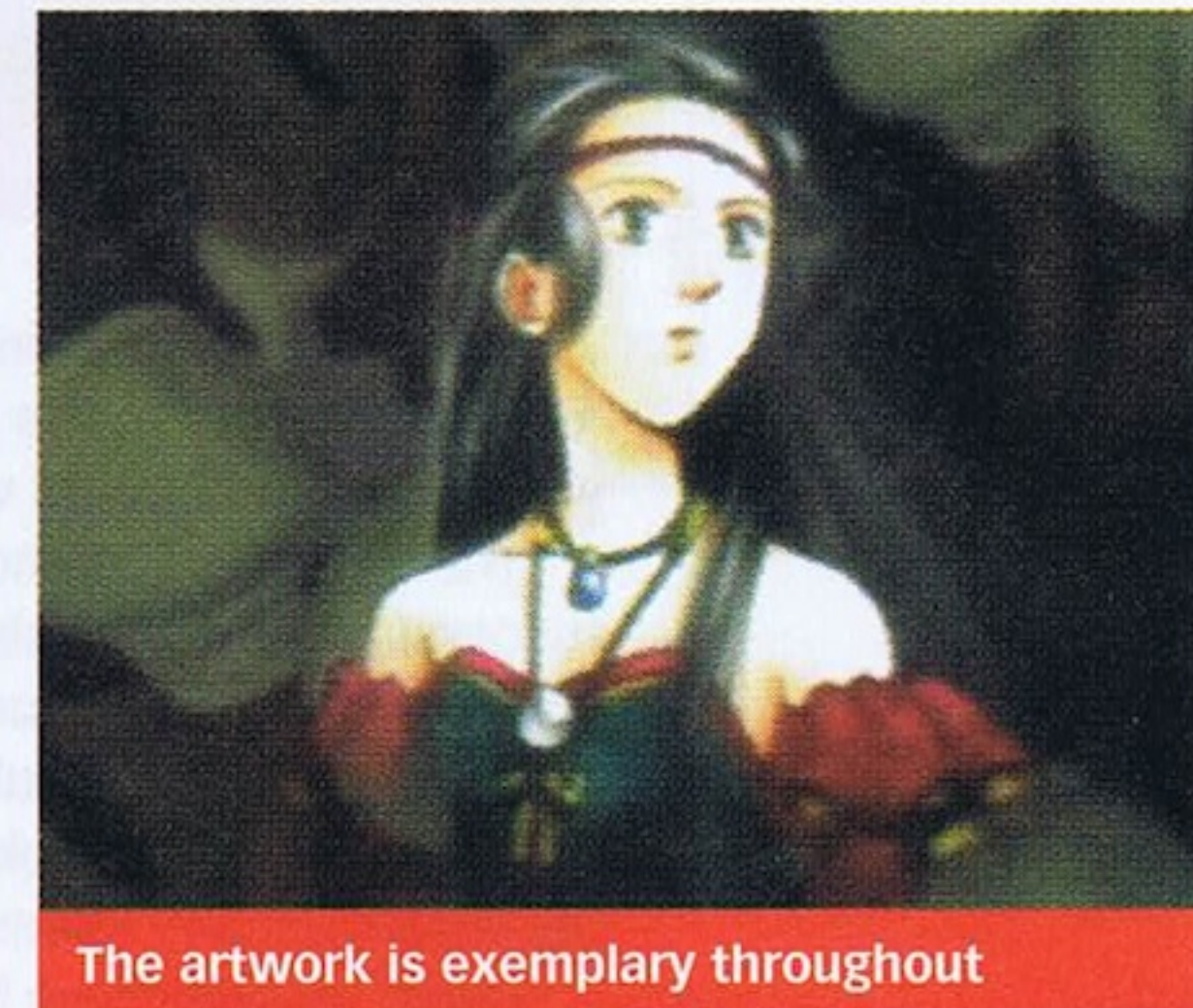
This allows for a substantial amount of character progression, where instead of serving as mere pawns in the game's development, most characters serve an integral function to the game. Moreover, rather than roam the expanse of the kingdom as a loner, *Suikoden II* provides the opportunity to accumulate a community of sorts, as well as to construct and house your cronies in your own castle. This happens to be only one of the aspects to the remarkable vastness of the game.



Suikoden 2 offers traditional 2D graphics with its trademark anime portrait shots of the speaker



James in his spare time



The artwork is exemplary throughout

USER-FRIENDLY GAME PLAY

In game play is very user-friendly and avoids the trap that some RPGs fall into of making executing actions a laborious process. You are able to carry six characters at a time in your group, each sport their own abilities in respect to attacks and spells. The unite feature has also been ported from *Suikoden*, allowing you to combine characters for a super attack.

The fight sequences utilise the standard turn-based process, which serves the purpose well and involves negligible loading times. Magic is accumulated as you progress through the game, where spells are allocated a certain number of times to be used.

The character profile interfaces are also easy to navigate, not requiring fifty menus and every button on the controller to view how many strength points you have left. *Suikoden II* is entirely sprite based in its presentation, only using 3D in the fight sequences. This ensures that game maintains a very smooth

appearance, which is also complemented by the crisp resolution. Although the terrain is not overly intricate, it is appealing and does lend an admirable visual standard to the game.

CHARACTER DESIGN

The character design is colourful and as detailed as can be expected. CG also makes occasional appearances throughout the game, lending cut-scenes just that little bit more. Epic RPG theme music permeates the majority of the game, and is complemented by above par sound effects. Unfortunately speech is provided for by dialogue boxes, however, vocals are more of a luxury than a necessity.

Suikoden II is not revolutionary by any means, where gamers expecting the next big thing in RPG are unlikely to be satiated. Notwithstanding, for others who are merely seeking a fulfilling old-school RPG experience, *Suikoden II* definitely fits the bill.

Keith Talent



Thousand Arms

A lecherous, offbeat RPG from Japan

FACT FILE

- Publisher
Atlus
- Developer
Red
- Genre
Role-playing game
- Release Date
TBA
- Players
One

PROGRESS REPORT

- Positive Points**
- ★ Funny storyline
 - ★ Hilarious dialogue
- Negative Points**
- ★ Visually boring
 - ★ Confusing combat system



Dialogue like this make Thousand Arms the classiest RPG around



Think of it as a smooth operator simulator



Every aspect of this game is two dimensional

At first look, *Thousand Arms* appears to be just another RPG. At a closer look, it is a just another RPG but with a bit of that classic feel to it. *Thousand Arms* has a few interesting features and a humorous storyline that will no doubt appeal to fans of the older style RPG.

The story centres on Meis Triumph, the son of the wealthy Spirit Blacksmith, Cliff. For generations, the Triumph family has ruled over the peaceful land of Kant until the Dark Acolytes came. The Triumph males, known more for lecherous ways than for their valour, fled without putting up a fight.

Meis, lost in the confusion of the evacuation, is now homeless but soon finds refuge with a kind girl called Sodina and her brother Jyabil, another Spirit Blacksmith. Meis begins his quest to prove himself and restore his family's honour.

As serious as the story sounds, *Thousand Arms* actually has a lot of funny moments and the dialogue is sometimes hilarious. This is mostly due to the storywriter's tendencies to want Meis to get with every pretty girl he sees. And there are plenty of girls around.

DIFFERING COMBAT SYSTEM

Aside from the story, another one of the features of *Thousand Arms* is its combat system and how it differs from the others. *Thousand Arms* uses a timed battle system taking into account that different moves, take different amounts of time to execute.

For example, after you issue an attack command, the time it takes to execute the attack counts down on the timer bar. When the

timer hits zero, the action button will flash.

You need to press X during the flashing or the attack will only be executed next turn. Sometimes this can get confusing, issuing orders and then waiting for them to execute. You can forget that retreating and using items also take up time and more often than not you've issued an attack already. Luckily you can cancel actions before they are executed.

Battles often take place between two parties, each usually consisting of 2 or more members. All of the fighting is handled by the front man of the party.

The other party members can only offer support until you issue the next character command to swap front men. This means that you should generally put someone strong up front to do most of the battling but it also means that you can use each of your

character's strengths and weaknesses strategically against your foe.

VISUALLY DATED

Visually, *Thousand Arms* looks a little dated. The combination of 2D characters and 3D backgrounds have worked well in the past for games like *Grandia* and *Persona 2*, sadly however, *Thousand Arms* is let down by uninteresting character designs. NPCs often look the same and the character sprites themselves are quite small. However the 3D environments are brightly textured and for the most part the area designs suit their purposes.

While not groundbreaking *Thousand Arms* is in the style of the classic RPG. Fans of the genre shouldn't dismiss this offhand. *Thousand Arms* should be hitting our shores soon. With the US edition fully translated and dubbed, a PAL conversion shouldn't be long in the works.

Aaron Lai



THE WESTERNER'S GUIDE TO JAPANESE VIDEOGAMES



So you have got yourself a Japanese game, but you have absolutely no idea what to do with it.

Or perhaps you are just begging to ask why on earth the games from Japan are so weird.

Or maybe you are not even sure what relevance Japan has to the gaming market.

WHY JAPAN?

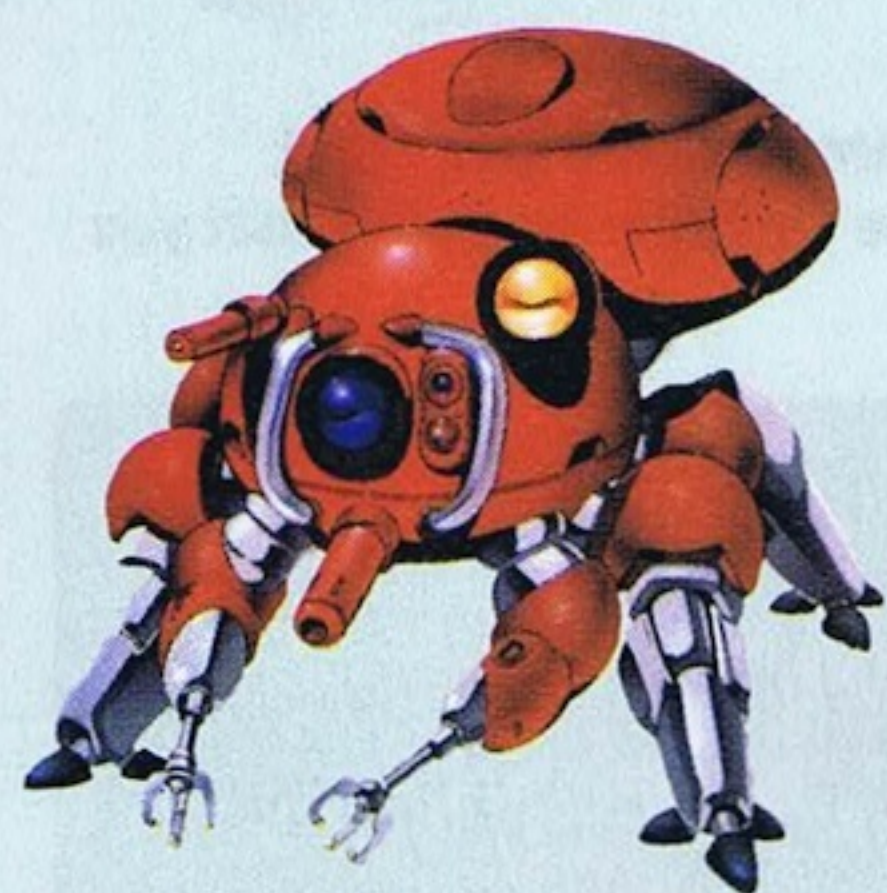
No doubt, a lot of you have heard about how Japan is the videogames centre of the world. But why? Does it mean that everyone in Japan is a diehard fanatic of interactive entertainment? In point of fact, the answer is no. Even though videogames have a larger mainstream presence compared to what we are accustomed to locally, the breakdown of Japanese society is quite similar to our own.

That is, you will get just as many people in Japan who hate videogames, who don't know the first thing about them, or who are so completely unco-ordinated that they couldn't play Tekken if their lives depended on it, as you do in your own neighbourhood.

What makes Japan the gaming capital of the world is the fact that a majority of the world's best games developers are located in Japan. Capcom, Squaresoft, Konami, Namco... that's where the world's best games like Metal Gear Solid and Final Fantasy come from.

It is for that reason that we are going to dive deep into the heart of the fabled Japanese gaming culture so that we may all better understand the quirkiness that has baffled us for years.

UNDERSTANDING THE JAPANESE GAMING CULTURE



More often than not, games from Japan are unfairly written off as "those wacky Japanese games" without a second thought. However, the games aren't that unusual once you understand the culture that surrounds videogames in Japan. Where we would ordinarily have rugby or some muscle-bound adventurer running through the forest, the Japanese have virtual pets, game shows and a dose of fantasy offered in anime.

ANIME: IT'S EVERYWHERE!

Anime, pronounced "ah-ni-meh", is the resultant form of animation that grew after certain aspects of the world of Disney was introduced into Japan. Japanese animators then developed their own style of cinematography, direction, and design apart from the rest of the world. Unlike the Western culture, which treats "cartoons" as a purely children's domain, the Japanese treat their anime with the utmost seriousness.

The stories are often highly mature, graphic, and deal with new and complex concepts. And they pour lots of money into production. Their approach to animation has produced some of the greatest animated features in film history, such as Akira, Ghost in the Shell, Princess Mononoke, and so on. There are even some Western films like The Matrix which are inspired directly by anime.

This is why many games from Japan feature animated FMV sequences or rendered CG artwork that has the trademark "big eyes", such as the opening theme to Soul Blade or Ghost in the Shell. It also explains the often erratic character and costume designs, such as the rabbit from Jumping Flash or the really big shoulder pads on characters from Toshinden.



Castlevania's CD extras

HARDCORE GAMING MARKET

Playing videogames is a mainstream past time in Japan. Much in the same way that us Westerners might come home from school or work and spend a few hours in front of the television to watch the football or soaps, the Japanese are just as likely to whip out the latest game on their game system.

With such a large and also diversified market, every company must compete tooth and nail for their own little share of the profits.



Castlevania SOTN

This has lead to the inclusion of many "added value" products that come packed with your game. Castlevania: Symphony of the Night (known in Japan as Dracula X: Nocturne in the Moonlight), for instance, was released in Japan with a bonus CD soundtrack and a limited edition artbook with concept designs, final artworks, and so on.

Reflecting the trends of this gigantic market is an equally dynamic market for videogame magazines. Magazines like Weekly Famitsu appear once every week, containing over 250 pages of some of seriously hardcore information.



Ghost in the Shell in print

BEYOND GAMING...

Many games develop a huge fan following, particularly the games with memorable artwork, excellent characters that people inevitably fall in love with, and so on. For this reason, Japan's gaming community enjoys the fruits of a massive derivative market for videogames.



The typical products you will find available are the art books, especially for games like Ghost in the Shell, Tokimeki Memorial, Sentimental Graffiti, and so on. The particularly good art books contain the works of legends like Kawamori Shoji and Masamuni Shirow, which in your local import shop, can set you back up to \$100!

Also popular are videogame soundtracks, which have been a booming business since the late 1980s. You can get complete soundtracks for virtually every game you can think of, from Metal Gear Solid and Resident Evil to remixed orchestral and vocal tracks for Final Fantasy VIII and Beatmania!



Ultimate fanboy collection



Transformers or Macross?

SUPER DEFORMED ACTION

Whilst reading an article about a Japanese game, you might have picked up a reference to the term "SD anime", or just plain "SD" - which stands for "Super Deformed".

Super Deformed is the phenomenon where ordinary characters are shrunk down in size so that they have big heads, short stubby limbs and very large eyes. The Japanese consider this as "cute", and it's often used to add some comic relief to the seriousness of a game.

Where have you seen SD before? The first place you can start is with Puzzle Fighter 2 Turbo and Pocket Fighter, where the characters are a miniaturisation of the original Street Fighter characters. Even



Cloud, Tifa, and the characters from Final fantasy VIII can be considered SD anime.



FFVII characters



Animal mech: ZOIDS!

THE WORLD OF MECHA

A large proportion of Japanese games are based on mecha, or otherwise robots. By the time the West had grown tired of the Transformers, the Japanese had already expanded into several new areas involving powerful oversized robots.

This includes the legendary Gundam series, the Macross series, and so on. On one hand, the popularity of mecha was exploited heavily by the toy market, much in the same way as GI Joe of He-Man, but companies like Bandai and Banpresto expanded into the world of videogames.

The PlayStation is littered with hundreds of games based on mecha adventures. This includes titles like the Super Robot Wars series, Remote Control Dandy, Gundam, and even Neon Genesis Evangelion.

The only problem is these games are predominantly turn-based strategy games that never showed off the PlayStation's abilities. For the most part, you had little animated sprites running around on a bland-looking chess board, which would ultimately bore anyone in the Western world to tears.

The more successful mecha games to have come into the Western market have been few. Games like Armoured Core and Ghost in the Shell have garnered their own cult followings, but since then, the best the market has offered has been Sony's Omega Boost.



CULTURE CLASH WHERE DO YOU STAND?



The sort of things that the Japanese look for in games differs in many respects from what is expected by Western audiences. In most instances, a game that originates from Japan will go through a little tweaking and modification before it has filtered through to us. Here is a breakdown of the kind of differences that you will find in Japanese games. When it comes to taste, where exactly do you stand?



Dino Crisis had fifty continues in Japan, but not half as many on PAL



Speed Freaks boasts impressive graphics

THE EAST

GRAPHICS - Visuals usually take a back seat to gameplay in Japanese games. The fans are more appreciative of good game design and tight execution, which is why a game like Metal Gear Solid sold so incredibly well in spite of the Western complaints of blockiness. That doesn't mean they don't crave great visuals - that's a bonus in itself. Aside from dazzling CG FMV sequences, most Japanese games typically resort to using traditional cartoon animation.

DIFFICULTY - Japanese games are usually easier. The fans over there prefer it that way. Dino Crisis, for instance, originally had 50 continues, making the puzzle-solving a lot more easy-going. Games that are "too hard" prevent you from appreciating a story at your own pace. Once you have solved a puzzle, it is not likely that you'll have problems solving it again in future.

GENRE OF CHOICE - RPGs and adventures. The Japanese audiences love a good story which is why the Japanese market is flooded with RPGs. Final Fantasy is but one franchise, which co-exists with Dragon Quest, Alundra, Wild Arms, Grandia, Arc The Lad, Langrisser, and numerous others. That's why even an action game like Tekken has a complex story behind it.

EXPERIMENTATION - Devil Dice. Mr. Domino. Trap Runner. It is obvious that the Japanese developers always try to go for something original, and it could be because they are far more competitive in their market. Whilst some may view it as Japanese weirdness, it's a goldmine for imagination and variety.

CRASH BANDICOOT - The Japanese love him. He has a massive fan following with gamers young and old, and it's obvious from the television commercials he appears in that it's due to his incidental anime appeal.

THE WEST

GRAPHICS - If you had to quantify the most important aspect of selling a game, you would put it down to 90% of the sale being attributable to the graphics. Games like Tomb Raider, Speed Freaks, Spyro, and even Soul Reaver usually boast about how pretty or smooth they run, in spite of the fact that their concepts are largely similar to other games within the same genre.

DIFFICULTY - The West likes them hard. Games that are too easy are deemed to be a waste of money. That's why games released in the West are generally more difficult, and games from Japan get additional difficulty levels put into them. Metal Gear Solid, for instance, originally never had anything harder than easy mode.

GENRE OF CHOICE - Action and adventure. A good bit of biff is what Western audiences seem to consistently crave, which is why sports games consistently do well. Movie tie-ins and action/adventures like Apocalypse, Syphon Filter, Spyro, and Croc are always destined to find an audience.

EXPERIMENTATION - Western audiences tend to only go for the "reliable" genres. The reason is simple: everybody wants to make a good purchase. Nobody wants to waste their money. That's why you see so many platform games, adventure games, racing games, and sequels for any successful game.

CRASH BANDICOOT - The West sees Crash as another mascot, hence a character that would only appeal to children. This might be why he hasn't been endorsed in any major fashion as the "official" mascot of the PlayStation.

TRANSLATION PROBLEMS?

The controversy surrounding Tobal 2 is legendary, and highlights many of the problems that exist in getting games out from Japan into a locally released form. Even though it was a fighting game, Tobal 2 contained an RPG mode that was more complex than what was offered by Soul Blade. You had to travel down underground, fight off an assortment of baddies, gain experience, and defeat the demon at the final dungeon. The RPG itself was huge, as you could explore through a town, buy items, and there were several dungeons to conquer. Amongst rumours as to why Tobal 2 was never released outside of Japan was the complications of having to translate the game. The fighting game was simple, but the RPG mode would involve translating an incredible amount of text. This is also one of the main reasons why the bulk of RPGs never see the light of day in the English speaking world.

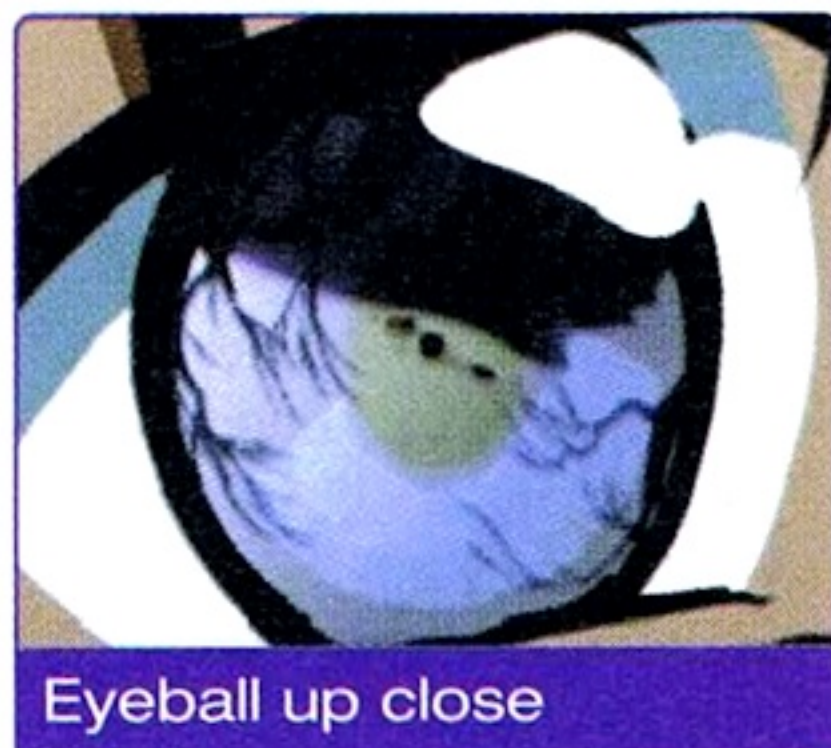
スタート



Anime chick



Tenchu controls



Eyeball up close

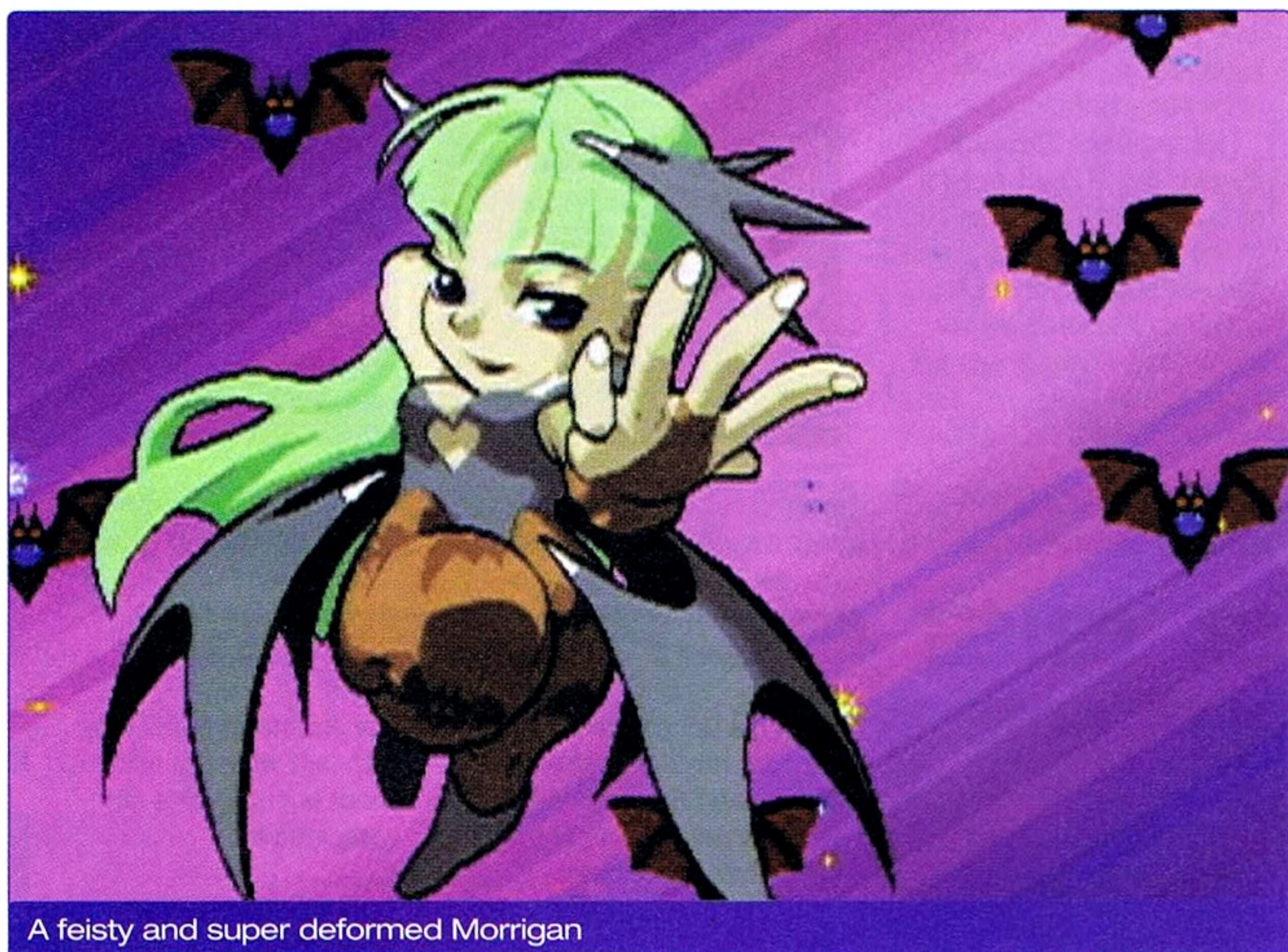


Tenchu title screen



Happy anime chick

GETTING THROUGH THE MENU SCREENS



A feisty and super deformed Morrigan

Most people are absolutely daunted at the sight of any game from Japan. Reason: the language barrier. But seriously, it is not as though the Japanese and English versions of the same game are completely different. If you are at all familiar with the kinds of menu screens you get in English games, then you should be able to guess your way through the Japanese menu screens.

Here is a quick little guide on how to navigate through the basic menu screens of any Japanese videogame.

[1.] GETTING STARTED

スタート

MEANING: Start
IN JAPANESE: "Su-ta-to"
FUNCTION: Starts the game.
When the Japanese don't really feel like talking in English, they

use their traditional language to say "start". In Japanese, this is pronounced "Ha-ji-meh", and it literally means "start" or "begin".

[2.] FINDING THE OPTIONS

ホップション

MEANING: Options
IN JAPANESE: "Oppu-shon"
FUNCTION: The function of options is to open up the options menu.

DID YOU KNOW?

...the Japanese almost adopted English as their national language? They later changed their minds and added "Katakana" to their language, which allows them to speak almost perfect English anyway.

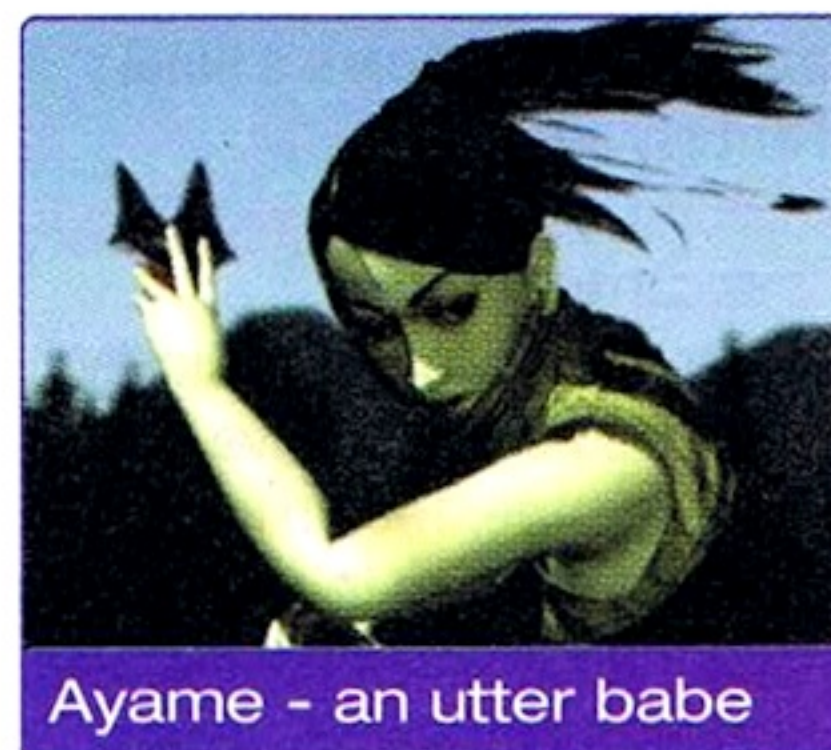
[3.] MEMORY CARD FUNCTIONS

This will bring you to the all-important screen where you can save your progress. Usually, you will be presented with only two options:

- Save セーブ - for saving games
- Load ロード - for loading up a saved game.

The game will usually ask you if you are sure if you want to proceed with the action, and present you with an option to select either "yes" or "no". In Japanese, this is what the words will look like:

"Yes" - はい - pronounced: "hai"
"No" - いいえ - pronounced: "I-yeh"
Sometimes, you will come across a button which says キャンセル, which means "Cancel".



Ayame - an utter babe

BUTTON CONFUSION?

The standard button configuration with Western games is for the X button to be used for confirming a choice, and the Δ button for cancelling or going back.

If you are getting confused by where you are going on the menu screens in a Japanese game, it's probably because you're pressing the wrong buttons.

In Japan, the general standard is for the O button to confirm one's choice, while the cancellations are performed only through the X button.



X is no; O is yes

THE BIG FOUR...

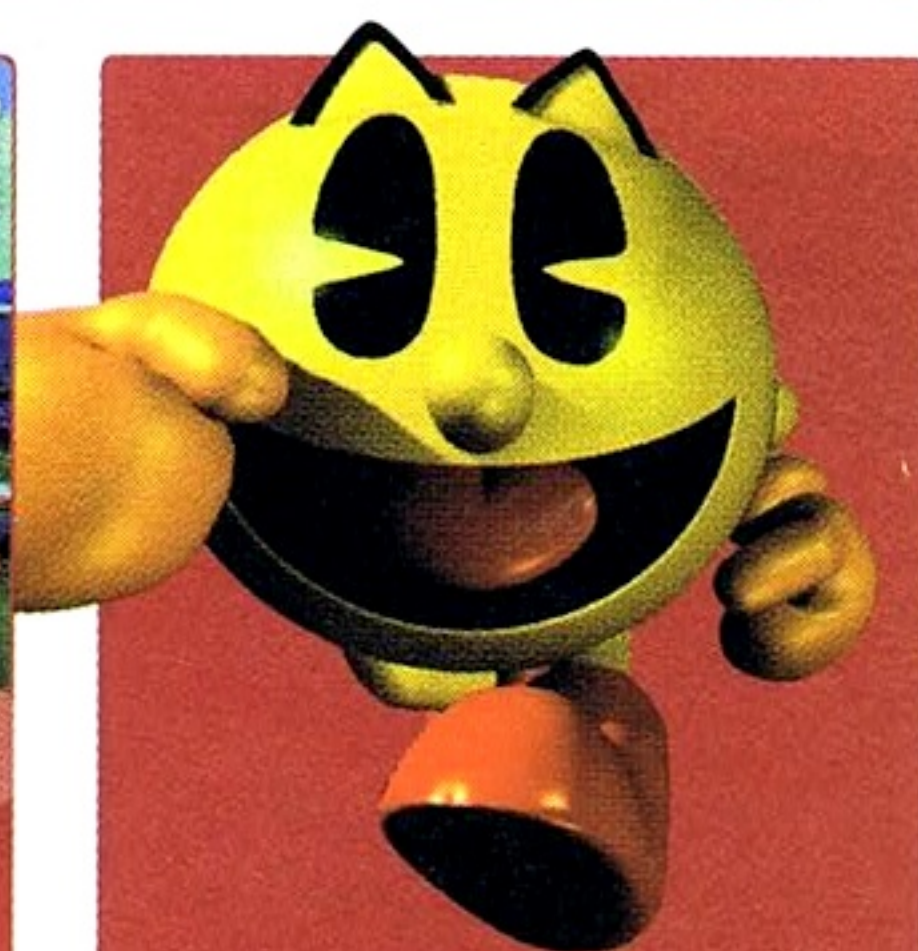


Ridge Racer Type 4

NAMCO

Better known throughout the West for blockbuster games like Ridge Racer and Tekken, Namco is a name that is synonymous with the PlayStation.

They are also particularly well known for their pioneering efforts in producing some of the most memorable FMVs of all time, such as the opening sequence to Soul Blade. Outside of the PlayStation, Namco also have the distinguished honour of being the company that created the most recognised videogame mascot in history, PacMan.



Namco's lesser known titles, many of which have never surfaced outside of Japan, are also quite good. The best amongst them is the highly popular Tales RPG series, which started with Tales of Destiny and Tales of Phantasia. Namco are reportedly now working on a third installment, Tales of Eternia.

Namco was also responsible for Klonoa, one of the most underrated games of 1997. Even though the game had spectacular production qualities, it was still outdone by the rather ho-hum Pandemonium games.



Parasite Eve II

SQUARESOFT

The West only knows Squaresoft for Final Fantasy games. The US has the benefit of a couple of other games we'll never see, such as Parasite Eve, Xenogears, and Einhander - but Square is essentially the most under-appreciated company in the West.

Games like Tobal 2, Einhander, and Brave Fencer Musashi dared to do new things and came off brilliantly in execution. Tobal 2 is still considered to be one of the greatest fighting games ever made. Its control system was so far ahead of its time that the game was hampered by the limitations of modern control pads.

Perhaps one day, local distributors will take note of how important Squaresoft is to the videogaming culture in general, because it would be a tragedy if we had to miss out on Dew Prism or Vagrant Story as well.



Megaman Battle & Chase

CAPCOM

On one hand, everyone knows Capcom for either the Street Fighter games or the Resident Evil games.

Capcom are actually responsible for a much larger number of 2D fighting games, such as the Vampire Hunter series, X-Men Vs Street Fighter, and Jo Jo's Adventures. In spite of the West's dislike for 2D games in general, Capcom have been able to use their considerable influence with the Resident Evil games to gain some leverage on creating more 2D fighting games.

Capcom are also known for the Breath of Fire RPG series, as well as anything associated with Megaman (aka Rockman in Japan). This includes the Megaman Legends games as well as Megaman Battle and Chase, which was a go-kart game featuring the blue bomber.



Metal Gear Solid

KONAMI

Konami's current claim to fame is obviously Metal Gear Solid. Konami are also currently reaping in the benefits of re-inventing the music genre with games like Beatmania, Dance Dance Revolution, and Guitar Freaks, which are still very popular in Japan.

Prior to those games, Konami produced several highly popular game franchises, such as the ever-popular Castlevania series, Contra (aka Super Probotector), Poy Poy, Vandal Hearts, and the Suikoden RPG series.

In Japan, Konami is also well known for its yardstick dating simulation game, Tokimeki Memorial. The Tokimeki Memorial series has spawned several expansion games, inspired a few "drama" CDs, and numerous art books featuring all of the girls from the game.

PROFILE: THE BIG PLAYERS



Enix - Bust a Groove 2

ENIX

Bust a Groove will be the only game that people can recall from recent memory of Enix's Western exploits. They have since produced Bust A Groove 2, which seems pretty unlikely for a local release. Enix are also the creators of the epic Dragon Quest series of RPGs, which is considered in many



Tecmo - Dead or Alive

circles to be even more popular than Square's Final Fantasy series.

TECMO

Better known for the critically acclaimed Dead Or Alive fighting game, Tecmo is much more well known in Japan for its horse racing simulation games, such as Gallop Racer. Tecmo



Atlus - Legend of Kartia

are responsible for the creation of games like Kagero: Deception 2.

ATLUS

Atlus is the company that produced Legend of Kartia and it is a company that has created numerous other turn-based adventure/strategy games similar to Vandal Hearts and Final Fantasy Tactics.

In the United States, they are currently enjoying the fruits of releasing Thousand Arms, which is gaining a lot of favour in Western RPG circles.

TAITO

Bubble Bobble. Puzzle Bobble. Raystorm. G Darius. Taito is one of the most overlooked companies in Japan, having produced some of the most memorable gaming experiences of all time, but always being written off for the numerous cutesy puzzle games they release. To this

day, Raystorm is still the standard which all new shoot'em up games are compared to.

BANPRESTO

Banpresto have literally released no games in the West. Banpresto currently enjoy a co-operative agreement with Bandai, which produces many of the most popular

contemporary anime such as Gundam, Cowboy Bebop, and Vision of Escaflowne. Their Super Robot Wars games are consistent bestsellers in Japan, but they have always been deemed to be just too weird for us Westerners.



Games Up!ay



\$79⁹⁵



No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking (G). Fear is not an option if you want to win. Race to the limit against computer-controlled opponents, each other or the clock. Rocket down mountainsides at break-neck speeds and hurl yourself over jumps and valleys.



Harvey Norman

THE COMPUTER SPECIALISTS

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HN20928

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OziSoft

Codemasters



HELPSTATION

MISS NURSE WANTS YOU!

Can't find the magic glowing rabbit to get past the third squid boss in the underwater city? Stuck in the boiler room of the old factory? Do you require some level skip codes and invincibility cheats to feel like a real PlayStation success? Write to Ms Nurse. She may just help you!



WRITE TO: AUSTRALIAN PLAYSTATION

Level 6, 418a Elizabeth St

Surry Hills NSW 2010

Email: playstation@next.com.au

DINO CRISIS

BONUS OUTFITS

If you beat the game in under 8 hours then you will get new costumes to wear as you play again.

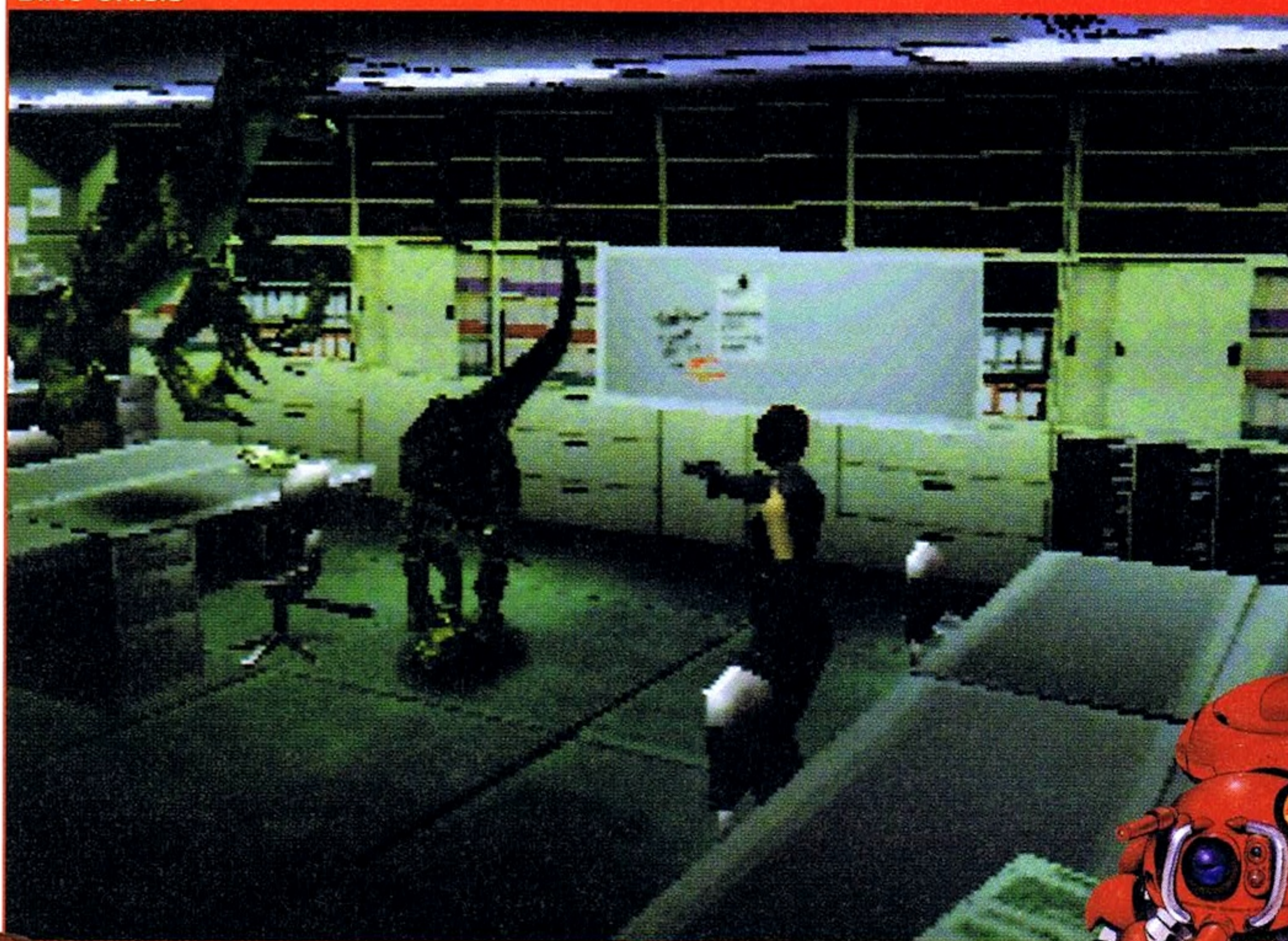
D.D.K DOOR LOCKS

To open the DDK doors use the "H" disks, then to find the DDK password simply take away the key letters from the code letters. For example if the code is HBCEFAGDI and the key is BCFG take BCFG away from HBCEFAGDI to get the password HEAD. **WARNING:** Watch out in this room, there is a T-Rex waiting for you when you leave! Also, the D.D.K lock downstairs is "NEWCOMER" for the password. You have to have both "N" disks when you do this.

FOURTH OUTFIT

When you finish the game for first time, Regina will get two new costumes (Battle type, and Army type). If you play through the game twice, you will get a 4th outfit for Regina to wear. It will change her into a cave girl (almost as though she came from the portal). An extra bonus for getting this is that if you check her guns at your EQUIP menu, they will have turned to ancient type weapons. They will still function like normal, though.

DINO CRISIS



INFINITE GRENADE GUN AMMO

When you have seen all three endings to Dino Crisis (you must play three separate games from start to finish), Regina not only starts with Grenade Gun in her arsenal, but she also has unlimited ammunition.

OPEN "OPERATION WIPEOUT"

If you Beat the game on Normal in UNDER 5 hours the game will unlock a sub-game called Operation Wipeout. In this sub-game you have to kill all the Dinos in under the given time.

NOTE: You only get a limited amount of ammo. All you get is what you have in your inventory, so it's a challenge.

GHOST IN THE SHELL

LEVEL SELECT

At the main menu press R2, R1, □, □, Up, Down, □, □, R2. A tone confirms the code.

SECRET PICTURE OF MOTOKO KUSANAGI.

If you beat the game without using any continues, you will see a full sized picture of Motoko Kusanagi. You have to wait for the regular ending to get done, along with the staff credits. When this is done you get to see the picture.

MADDEN NFL 2000

SECRET CODE MENU CODES

Enter these codes in the Secret Codes section

FINALTIME
MAGNASAVE
TEFLON
DRBENWAY
STATICCLING
VERTIGO
TALKINGWHAT
FASTFORWARD
NO2
PICKEDOFF
SMACKDOWN
SPRONG
FRAPLPRO
ROLLERGIRL
PIGSKINSFLY
POPWARNER
BIGFOOT
MINIME

Quick fatigue
Receivers catch better
Harder to tackle players
Different scoring rules
Electric sidelines
Camera follows football
Floating heads
Fast passes
Super speed burst
More interceptions
Super stiff arm
Super jump
More defensive scoring
More fumbles
100 yard passes
5 yard first downs
100 yard field goals
Big vs. small

GHOST IN THE SHELL



HELPSTATION

MADDEN NFL 2000



MADDEN NFL 2000



PAINFUL	More injuries
REFISBLIND	Fewer penalties
FIRSTIS20	1st down is 20 yards
QBISINTHECLUB	QB can't be sacked
EXPRESSBALL	No interceptions
MILLENIUM	Extra stadiums
WILDWEST	Old west stadium
ITSINTHEGAME	EA sports stadium
XMASGIFT	Xmas stadium
QUETZLCOATL	Incas stadium
PANCAKES	Alpha Blitz stadium
SPACEBALL	Cosmodome stadium
KLAATU	Gridiron stadium
DENILE	Nile High stadium
TETANUSHOT	Salvage stadium
FEEDTHELIONS	Tiberium stadium
WEPUTITHERE	Tiburon stadium
COTTONCANDY	Tiburon Bros. stadium
PLAYWTHHEART	Vipers team
XMASFILES	Toymakers team
INTHEFUTURE	Industrials team
COWBOYS	Marshalls team
TIMELESS	Madden Millennium team
MADMADDEN	Junkyard team
KTHULU	Monster team
WRAPPEDUP	Mummy team
MOJOBABY	All '60s team
LOVEBEADS	All '70s team
BIGHAIR	All '80s team
INTERNS	All '90s team
GETMEADOCTOR	1972 Raiders team
DONTGOFOR2	1972 Steelers team
HACKCHEESE	1976 Patriots team
GAMMALIGHT	1976 Raiders team
BUILDMONKEYS	1981 Chargers team
15MOREMIN	1981 Dolphins team
DOORKNOB	1985 Bears team

SLED STORM

GET THE STORM SLED

Go in the options screen and select the load/save option. Now select the password option. Press O, Δ, □, R2, R2, L1, X, Δ.

PLAY AS JACKAL

Enter at the password screen L2, L2, O, R2, □, R1, L1, Δ.

STREET FIGHTER EX PLUS ALPHA

BONUS GAME

Go to the practice mode and press Select, then quickly press Up, Up, Right, Up, Right, Up and Select. If you did it right a message will say "Here comes a bonus game." Enter practice mode and the new mode will become available.

FIGHT ULTIMATE EVIL GOUKI

To make Ultimate Evil Gouki challenge you, you must finish the Arcade Mode with at least two perfect rounds without being defeated. In stage 10, Ultimate Evil Gouki will perform a Shun-Goku-Satsu on Vega.

HIDDEN CHARACTERS

Go to the Mode Select screen and highlight Practice. Then press Select, Up, Right, Down, Right, Select. Then if it worked you will see this message "Here comes a new Challenger."

OPTIONS PLUS

To unlock the OPTIONS PLUS setting, complete the game in expert mode.

PLAY WITH CRACKER JACK'S ALUMINIUM BAT

Select Cracker Jack then immediately press and hold Up, □, O, R1, and R2 until the fight starts. When the fight begins you will have the bat!

PLAY AS POWERFUL GOUKI, VEGA & GARUDA

Gain enough experience that the three pictures of Gouki, Vega and Garuda are highlighted in the expert mode screen. Now go to the character select screen and hold SELECT while choosing either Gouki (Akira), Vega (Bison) or Garuda.

SAVE THE BONUS GAME

Complete the game in expert mode and gain at least 65535 experience. You will now have the ability to save the bonus game on your memory card.

TAUNTS

There are three characters that have the ability to taunt their opponents.

DHALSIM

While in the air press Forward, Forward, Up, Up, Back, Up, Back.

SAKURA

Press Low Kick, Low Kick, Back, Low Punch, High Punch.

SKULLOMANIA

For the taunting, press Forward, Forward + Down, Down, Back + Down, Back, Back + Up, Up, Forward + Up and Punch.



SLED STORM



HELPSTATION

TEKKEN 3



HWOARANG THE CHEERLEADER



TEKKEN 3

COMBO RECORDING

Go to the practice mode and choose the Freestyle option. At the freestyle options screen, press L1, L2, R1, R2 and O then press DOWN and SELECT to record a combo or to replay a combo.

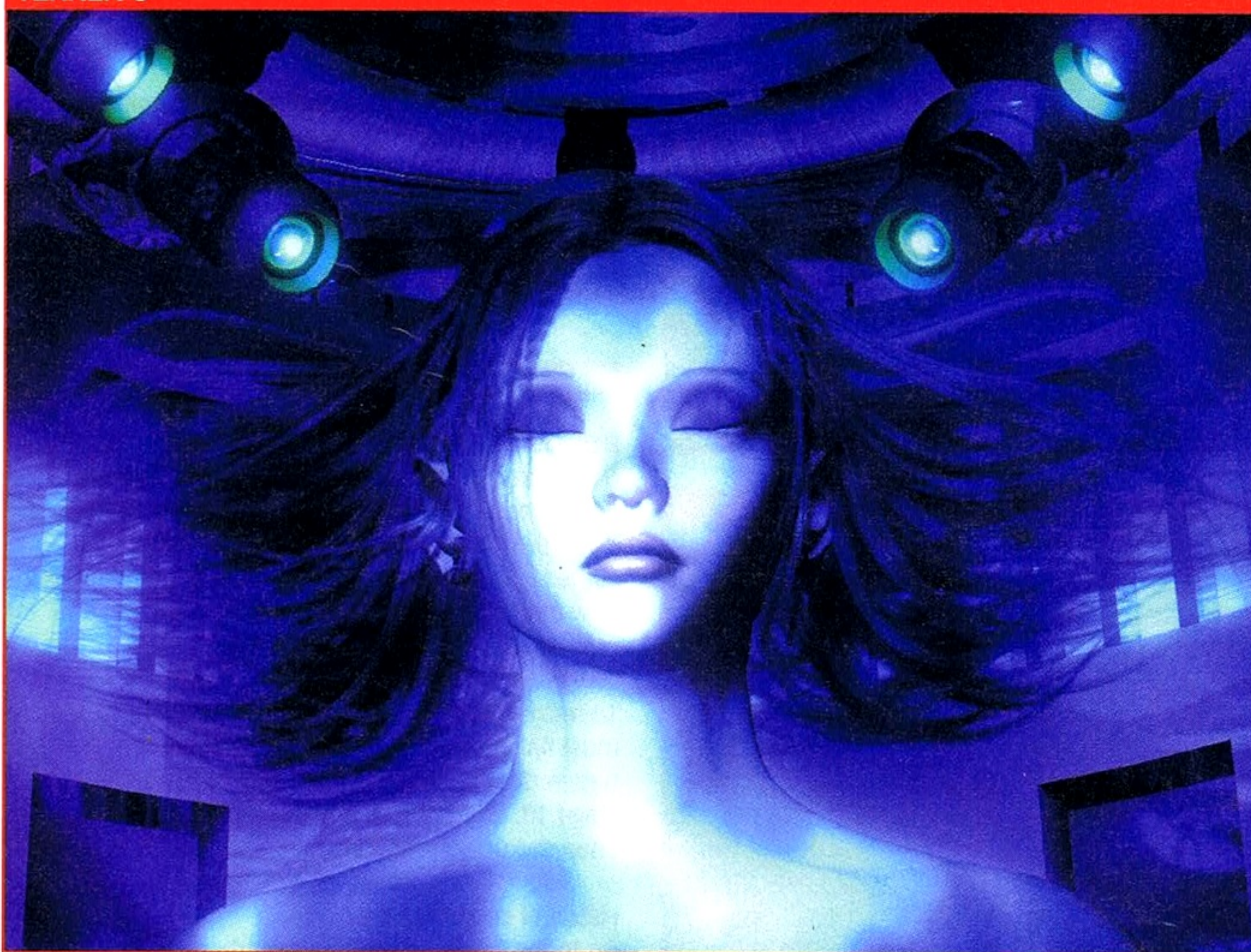
GON AND DR. B MADE EASY

If you can't beat ball mode or force mode or just don't have the time, here is an easy way to get them. Set the game on easy and one round and infinite time. Play the arcade mode and for the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh round let the enemy take all but 5 percent of your health then KO them. If you did it right you will here the announcer say "great!" On the next round you will fight Gon or Dr. B. Kill them by using sweeps or anything else and they are yours.

INSTANT REPLAYS IN PRACTICE MODE

From the main screen enter Practice Mode. Choose your characters, and start a 1P Freestyle game. When the 1P Freestyle menu pops up (before the fight begins) press L1, L2, R1, R2, and O all at the same time. Start the battle as

TEKKEN 3



normal, and at the bottom of the screen will be the commands, involving Select.

MAKE MOKUJIN SOUND LIKE A WOODEN BLOCK
On Mokujin's Pic, hold DOWN until the match begins.

MEMORY CARD CHEAT LEADER

If you are using a memory card to store your status and you are trying to unlock all the cheats, it will help you out. Turn on the PlayStation with no game inside, and your memory card in. Then go to the memory card option. Select "copy" (not "delete" just to avoid any accidents) and then point the cursor at your memory block for Tekken 3.

THE NAME OF THE FILE WILL READ: # OF CHARACTERS LEFT!

Tells how many secret characters have not been gotten yet, excluding Gon and Doctor B.

TEKKEN BALL UNLOCKED

Tells when Tekken Ball option becomes selectable.

PLAY TEKKEN FORCE

Tells when Gon is gotten, and Doctor B is not.

USE [CHARACTER'S NAME]

Displays name for one of the characters with a third outfit that has not been gotten.

NEW BATTLES AWAIT

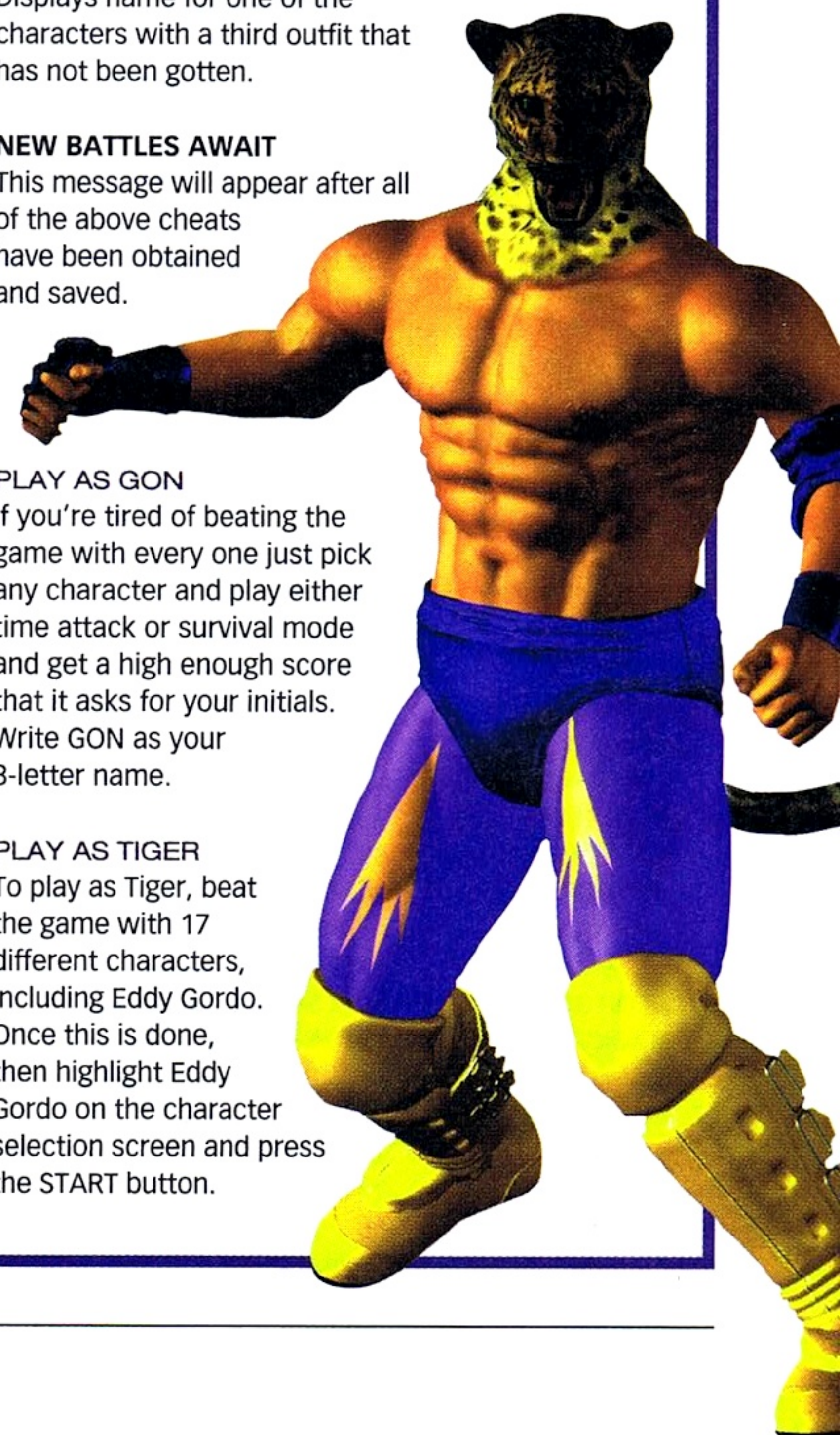
This message will appear after all of the above cheats have been obtained and saved.

PLAY AS GON

If you're tired of beating the game with every one just pick any character and play either time attack or survival mode and get a high enough score that it asks for your initials. Write GON as your 3-letter name.

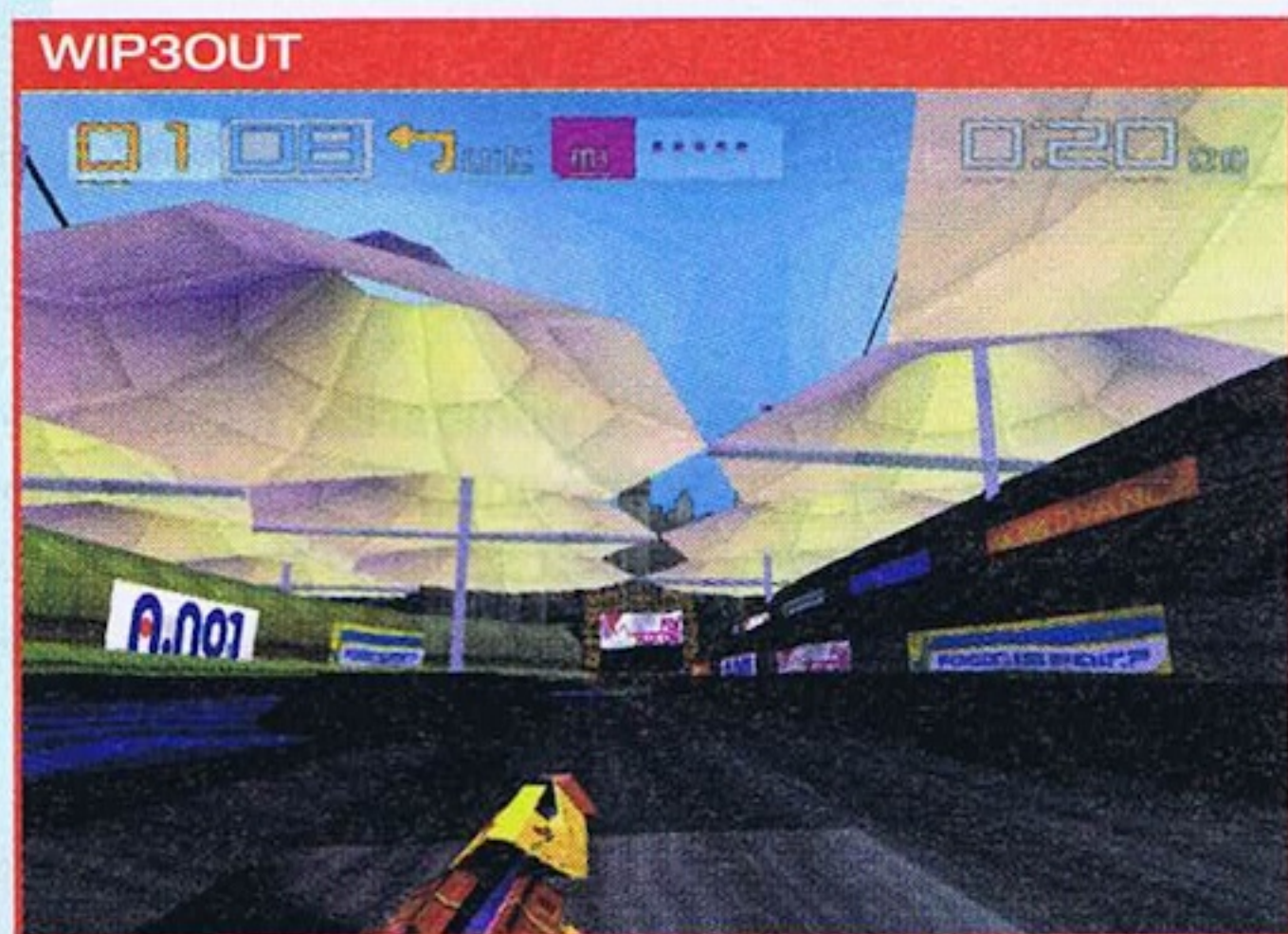
PLAY AS TIGER

To play as Tiger, beat the game with 17 different characters, including Eddy Gordo. Once this is done, then highlight Eddy Gordo on the character selection screen and press the START button.





HELPSTATION



WIP3OUT

For each of the following cheats, you have to enter the code word as the player's default name under Options, Games Options, Default Names. The screen will flash to signal its correct entry. The cheats are cumulative, so you can have more than one active at once:

LINK	Enable link mode, for up to four player simultaneous lovin'
BEBEDEE	Change blue turbo triangles to white turbo triangles
NOWHEELS	Collisions

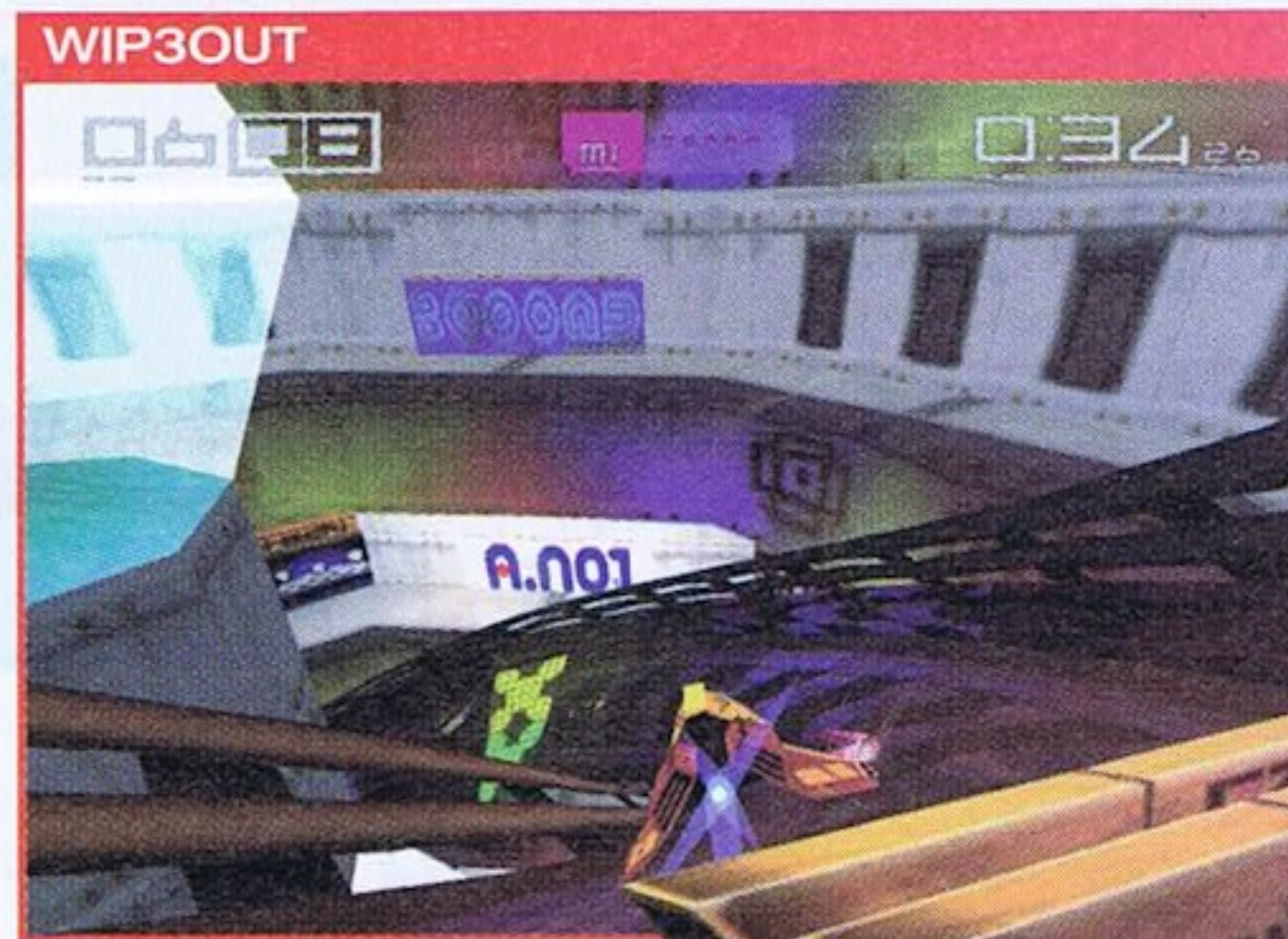
DEPUTY
MOONFACE
GEORDIE
BUNTY
JAZZNAZ
CANERW
THEHAIR
AVINIT
WIZZPIG

Infinite Weapons
Unlimited hyperthrust
Unlimited shields and thrust
Unlock all tournaments
Unlock Phantom Class
Unlock all 4 prototype tracks
Unlock all challenges
Unlock all teams
Unlock all tracks

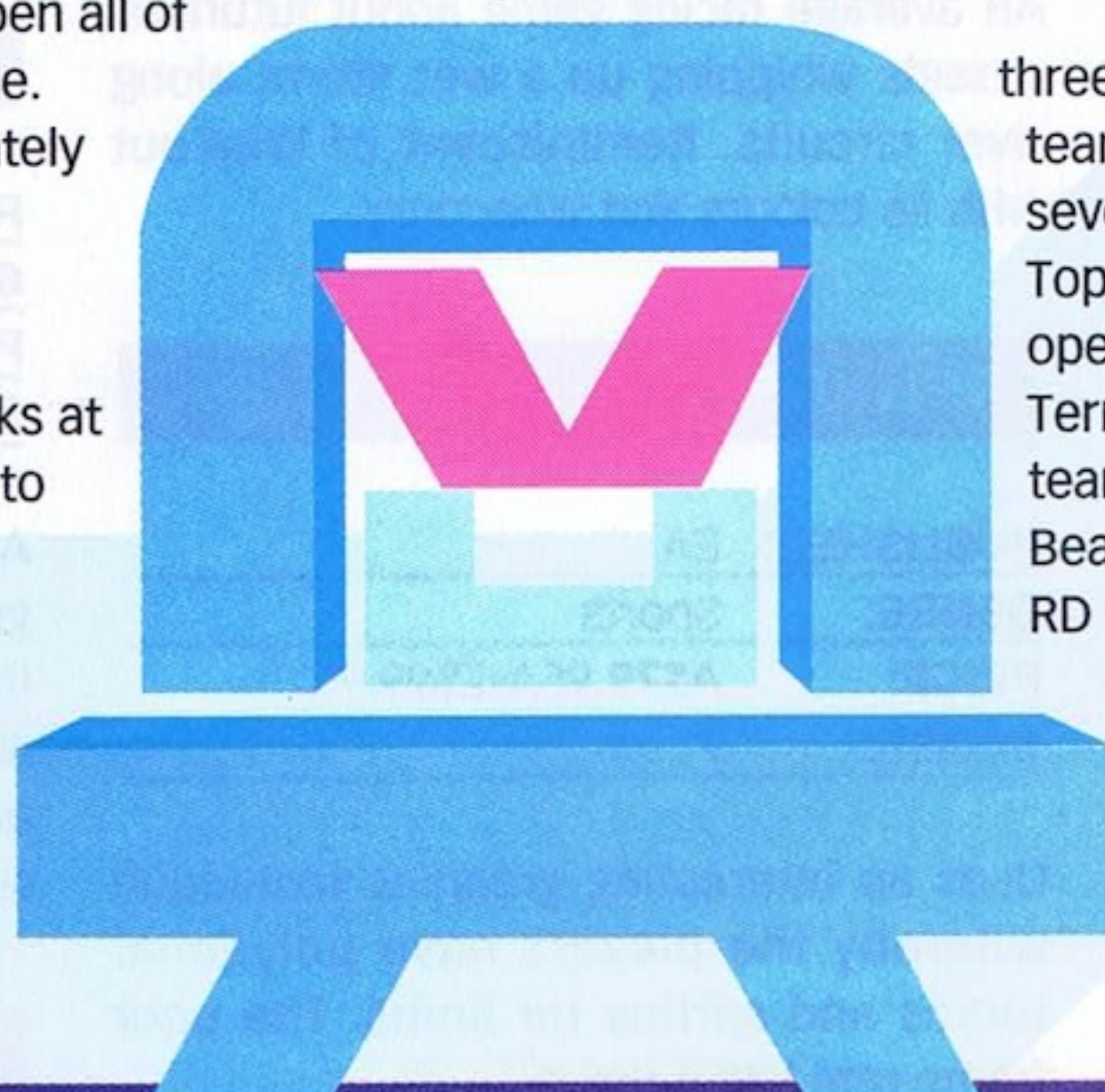
OPENING NEW TRACKS AND TEAMS - (THE HARD WAY)

There are a total of eight tracks and eight racing teams. Here's how to open all of them in single-race mode. You must do this separately for each racing class (ie. Vector, Venom, Rapier):

Finish all four initial tracks at gold with any one team to open the fifth track, Hi-Fumii. Finish Hi-Fumii at gold with two different teams to open the sixth track, P-Mar Project. Finish P-Mar Project at gold with



three different teams to open the seventh track, Manor Top. Beat Manor Top at gold with all four (initial) teams to open the eighth track, Terminal. Beat Terminal at gold with all four (initial) teams to open the fifth team, Qirex RD. Beat any two tracks at gold with Qirex RD to open the sixth team, AG-5. Beat any three tracks at gold with AG-5 to open the seventh team, Assegai. Beat any four tracks at gold with Assegai to open the eighth team, Icaras.



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Jaycar
ELECTRONICS

BUYER'S GUIDE

PlayStation magazine has formed the Buyer's Guide to give you, the reader, an idea about the games that have been released over recent months. Use this as a guide when buying your PlayStation software.



360

PUBLISHER: Cryo
GENRE: Futuristic Racing
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 6

An average racing game about futuristic vessels whipping up a wet storm along river circuits. Reminiscent of Wipeout with its colours and weaponry.



AFL '99

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Sports
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 7

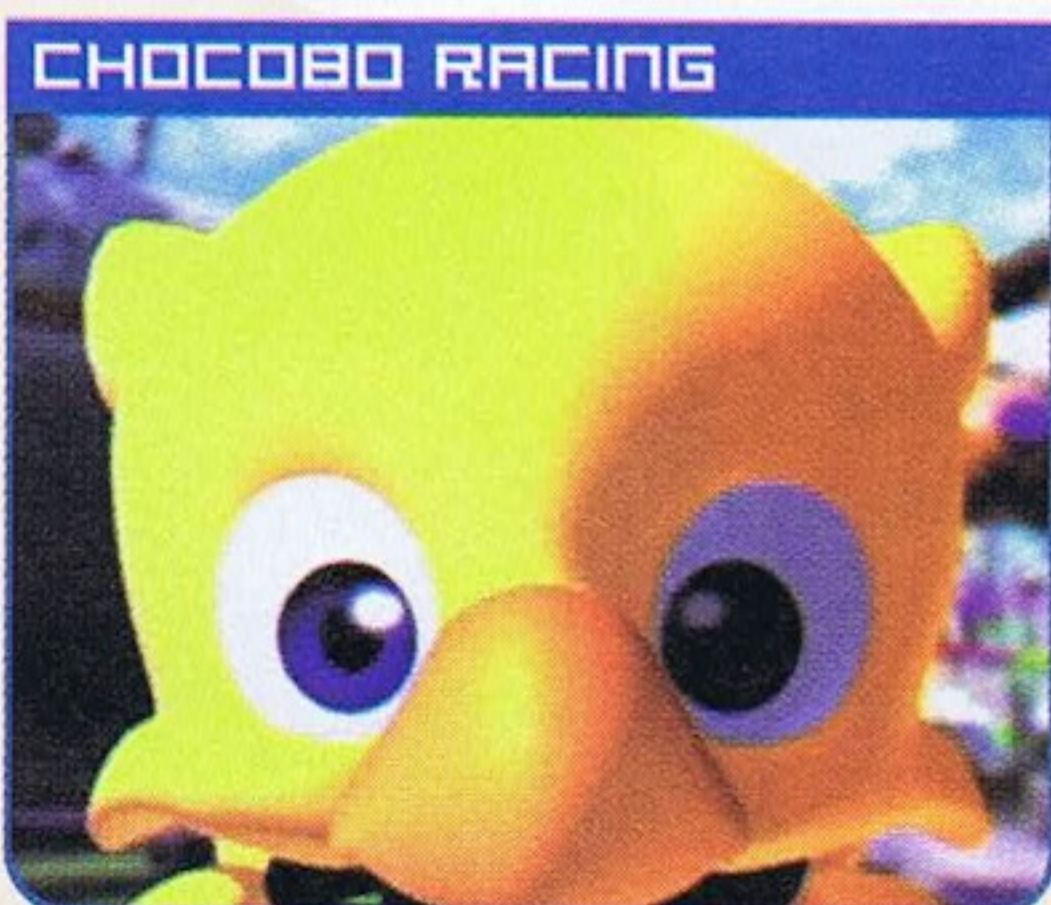
Uses an interesting graphics technique whereby the players have polygonal torsos and sprites for limbs. The poor frame rate lets it down.



AIRONAUTS

PUBLISHER: Jack of all Games
GENRE: Flying Gameshow
PRICE: A\$69.95/NZ\$119.95
SCORE: 3

Painfully chuggy flight sim with no realistic merit. You play the role of a criminal on a gameshow, trying to redeem yourself by risking your life in a crazy aeronautic arena. Crap game.



ANNA KOURNIKOVA

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Tennis
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$69.95
SCORE: 8

A surprisingly deep tennis game with all the charm and playability of the first Smash Court. Cute characters and amusing animations breathe life into the stale sport of videogame tennis. Yoshimitsu's in it too!



APE ESCAPE

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$79.95
SCORE: 10

A superb adventure for younger gamers,

or anyone with an itch to go catch some monkeys. The first game to be exclusively used with a Dual Shock controller, it isn't even compatible with a standard controller at all. Colourful, action-packed and huge, Ape Escape will enchant all ages.

BLOODY ROAR 2

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: 3D Beat 'em up
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$109.95
SCORE: 9

An extremely fast fighter with very sharp graphics that unfortunately doesn't really improve on the first game too much. Nonetheless, it is a great fighting game and one for the collection of any fighting fanatic - especially a pet lover.

BUGS BUNNY

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 6

Everyone's favourite wabbit stars in his own 3D platform title. It's not a bad game, but it comes off as simplistic for veterans of the genre. Recommended for younger players.

BUST A GROOVE

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Dancing
PRICE: A\$69.95/NZ\$79.95
SCORE: 8

The one and only dancing title for your PlayStation. Your head will swim at the sight of the silky smooth graphics and your booty will bounce to the beat of the tunes. Two dance contestants take the stage and try to out-boogie each other with timing and skill. Bust A Groove is guaranteed to please any crowd.

CARMAGEDDON

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$109.95
SCORE: 8

A mighty fine conversion it is. Not for the squeamish, this game is filled with

zombies, dismemberments, gore-filled car accidents, and a hapless wee lamb named Fifi who survives the destruction. Carmageddon is definitely for lovers of wild destruction and mayhem.

CHOCOBO RACING

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Racing
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

Chocobo Racing is a quirky racer from the makers of FFVII and Bushido Blade. This only goes to show that Squaresoft are really capable of making all types of games. The game includes various weapons and some cute animals.

CRASH BANDICOOT 3

PUBLISHER: Universal Interactive
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: A\$69.95/NZ\$79.95
SCORE: 10

The best reached a glorious climax with this beautiful game. Go scuba diving, fly an aeroplane, ride the tiger, hoon on a motorbike, pilot a spaceship and surf on a jetski! Crash Bandicoot: Warped is a platforming experience not to be missed by anyone. An absolute must for any platformer fan.

DEVIL DICE

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Puzzle
PRICE: A\$59.95/NZ\$69.95
SCORE: 8

The king of puzzlers. Looking nothing like a Tetris clone that most puzzlers are prone to doing, Devil Dice features a riveting single player mode and a frantic five player war as well. One of the only puzzlers to fully utilise the 3D plane.

DINO CRISIS

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Horror
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

Jurassic Park meets Resident Evil. Play the curvaceous special forces babe Regina as you investigate an island

research base where re-gen'd dinosaurs have run amok. Sharp graphics and a lingering sensation of menace make it the best game of its kind yet seen.

DRIVER

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 9

Think GTA, except in first person. This game puts you in the shoes of an undercover cop, and your missions involve high speed chases, bank robberies, getaways, and other forms of motor-head malarkey through the streets of America. A satisfying game in every respect.

EVERYBODY'S GOLF 2

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Golf
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 7

Worthy of a higher score for pure gameplay, but it was lowered due to the fact that it is almost identical to EG1. Cute, very playable and great for parties.

FIFA '99

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Soccer
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 9

FIFA '99 is the absolute best ever soccer game that is available for the PlayStation, bar none. It's got the lot, including great graphics, excellent motion and more stats than you can shake a stick at. The only choice for any true fan of the game.

FINAL FANTASY VIII

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Epic RPG
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 10

A better game than FFXVII in every way, apart from the low-res battle backgrounds. With turn-based combat, hours of the world's best FMV and a never-ending plotline, this is a game that will hold any player still for months, if not years.

FISHERMAN'S BAIT

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Fishing
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 8

A truly innovative fishing game with two player support. Employs the Dual Shock thumbsticks in a unique way that

actually applies to real fishing. The best PSX fishing sim yet.

FORTY WINKS

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Platform
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$89.95
SCORE: 6

A vaguely original platform game in which two children must search a number of dream realms to find the forty winks. Some nice ideas, but why oh why does the PlayStation version lack the co-operative mode while the N64 does not?

G POLICE 2

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Flying Shooter
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 7

In the dark, distant future crime is way out of control. G-Police 2 improves on the formula employed by the first game, with more weapons and vehicles to pilot, yet fails to offer either anything new, or a particularly rewarding experience.

GRAND THEFT AUTO 2

PUBLISHER: Take2 Interactive
GENRE: Criminal Acts
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$59.95
SCORE: 9

A splendid sequel that carries through Grand Theft Auto's tradition of ignoring the law in a big city. Plenty of "you're nicked," and "cor blimey!" type language to suit the times plus the odd murder and hit and run. Playing bosses against each other is also a great new feature.

GUNGAGE

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: 3D Shooter
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 7

Run around in chunky environments blasting all that moves and many things that don't. An appreciable game for shoot-em-up devotees with some truly imaginative boss characters, but not for most people.

HOT WHEELS

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Stunt Racing
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 8

A brightly coloured, offbeat racing game which brings the toys to life. Most notable for its convoluted tracks, and your ability to perform tricks and stunts

mid-air to earn turbo boosts. Hot Wheels is good fun, but doesn't compare to "real" racing games.

JET RIDER 3

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Jetski Racing
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 6

The third Jet Rider in the series is almost identical to the first two: you race over all manner of surface, pulling off big stunts and using the electromagnetic poles to corner sharply. Colourful fun, sadly with a poor framerate.

KENSEI: SACRED FIST

PUBLISHER: Konami
GENRE: Fighting
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$119.95
SCORE: 7

Kensei: Sacred Fist is a 3D fighter which tries out some new ideas and employs full freedom of movement, but fails somewhat in bodily fluidity. Like a stiff version of Tekken with a far superior blocking system.

KURUSHI FINAL

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Puzzle
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$69.95
SCORE: 8

This is arguably one of the toughest puzzle games ever conceived on the PlayStation. If you loved the challenge of Devil Dice, or are a puzzle fan anyway, make this game your next stop. Very stylish and it supports two players.

LEGEND OF LEGAIA

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: RPG
PRICE: A\$69.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

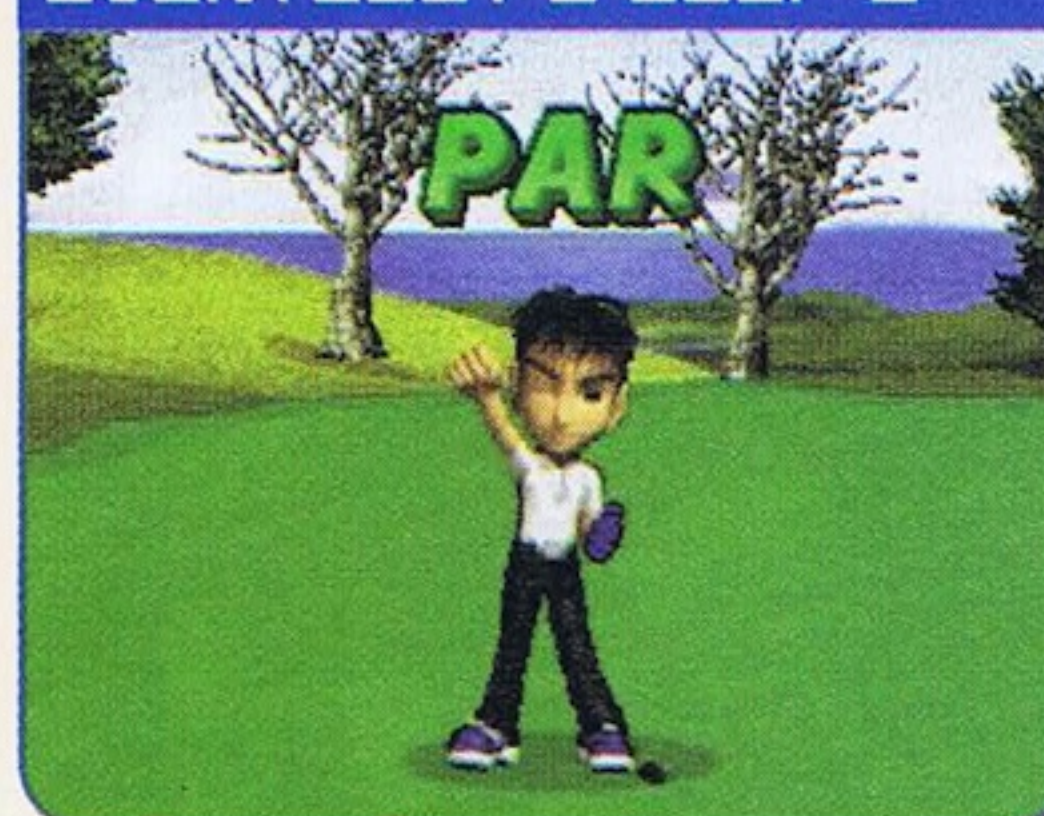
Legaia is a traditional RPG, programmed entirely in 3D. Its strong point is the tireless battle system which involves fists and feet as much as weapons and spells. The plot is also better than average and there are mini-games within the whole to keep players' interest up. Not exactly in the same vein as the Final Fantasy series, but definitely a thoroughly entertaining piece of work.

LEGEND OF KARTIA

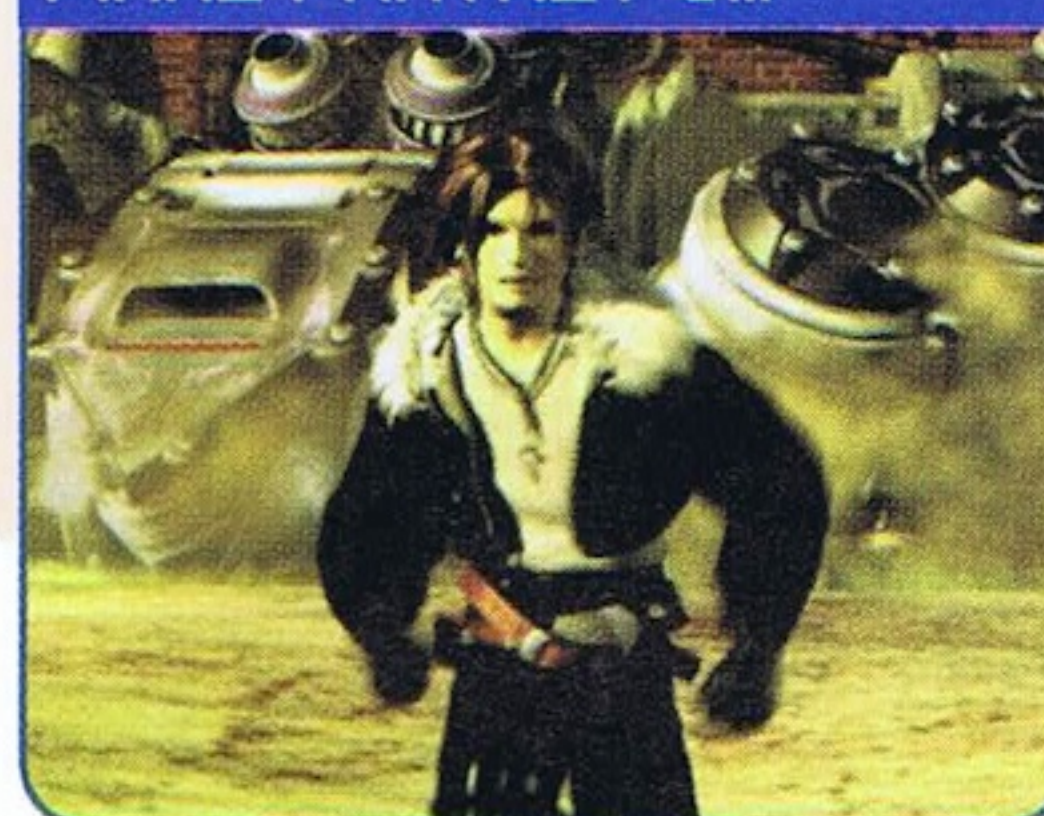
PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 8

A fantastic title for anyone who loved

EVERYBODY'S GOLF 2



FINAL FANTASY VIII



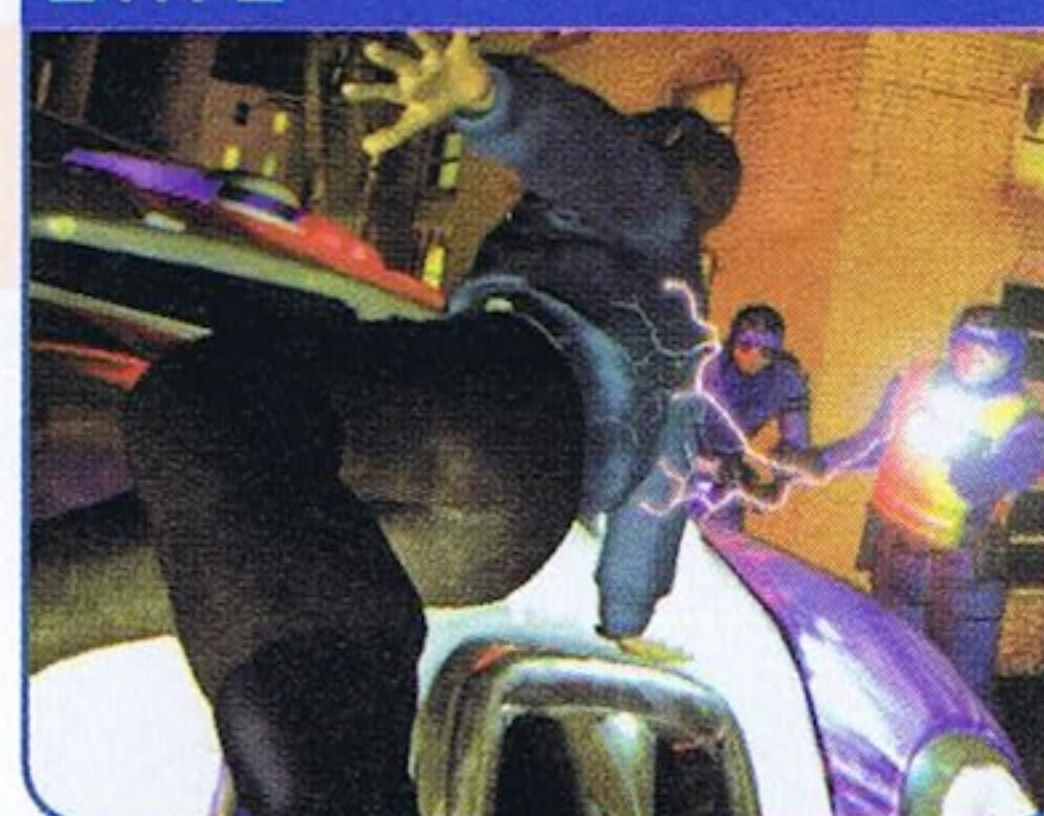
FORTY WINKS



GUNGAGE



GTA 2



JET RIDER 3



Madden NFL 2000



Vandal Hearts. It's a traditional turn-based strategy game with a wonderful storyline. Some of us think it's better than Final Fantasy Tactics!

Madden NFL 2000

PUBLISHER: EA Sports
GENRE: Gridiron
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

Mission Impossible



Running at a surprisingly high frame rate all the time, Madden has the fluidity to please any eye. The graphics could be rounder on the whole, but the motion-captured animations of the many players on-screen will soothe any American football fan.

Metal Gear Solid

PUBLISHER: Konami
GENRE: Tactical Action
PRICE: A\$99.95/NZ\$119.95
SCORE: 10

Probably the PlayStation's biggest name yet, Metal Gear Solid is subtitled "Tactical Espionage Action", and it is just that. As an old spy dragged out of retirement for a mission the world depends upon, you must break into high-tech installations and rescue the hostages using whatever you can find lying around to help you out.

Monaco GP 2



Mission Impossible

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Action/Espionage
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

Slightly better than its N64 counterpart, MI features fake face skins that made the TV show so good. For running around doing missions, this is above average.

NBA Live '99



Monaco GP 2

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

One of the best Formula 1 racing games available for PlayStation, MGP2 offers an excellent mix of graphics, sound and realistic gameplay that features an arcade mode for the beginners and simulation mode for the experts. This game comes very highly recommended.

Rainbow 6



NBA Live '99

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Basketball
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$69.95
SCORE: 9

NBA Live '99 has everything a basketball

fan needs in a videogame. The graphics and the gameplay have improved from NBA Live '98, and the depth of stats is incredible. The players also smile from time to time. Can't wait for NBA Live 2000.

NFL Blitz 2000

PUBLISHER: Midway
GENRE: Gridiron
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

Blitz 2000 picks up where the original NFL Blitz wasn't even able to leave off, being the first Blitz game to hit our local shores. This game throws the rules out the door and turns it into a game of unabashed bone-crunching mayhem.

NHL '99

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Ice Hockey
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$69.95
SCORE: 9

The slickest ice hockey title currently available on the PlayStation, with all of the official emblems included. It follows EA's law of realism, so there is definitely plenty of mindless violence in this game.

PocketFighter

PUBLISHER: Capcom
GENRE: 2D Fighting
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 8

Deformed versions of your favourite characters engage in surreal combat. The combos are hilarious, like the one where Chun-Li attacks with a wave of cyclists, or the one in which Zangief forces his opponent to cook him breakfast!

Point Blank 2

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Light Gun
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$129.95
SCORE: 9

The gun game to beat all gun games. The first game was a tad easy, but this game really comes back in force. It's harder, funnier, bigger... everything it was meant to be in the first place. Dust off your G-Con.45s folks, because this game seriously rocks; and it rocks even harder if you have got mates to play with.

Populous The Beginning

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 8

Get to play God in this 3D civilisation simulation. It remains much the same as

all of the other Populous titles were before this, but is tweaked in the name of PlayStation playability. Everything is 3D, for example, which might be considered good...

Poy Poy 2

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Party Game
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$119.95
SCORE: 8

With a multitap this game can't be beat. All you have to do is throw some rocks and other dangerous articles at your varied competitors in a small arena. That's basically the aim of the game! There is a good sense of humour in this that makes for a great fun game.

Pro 18 World Golf Tour

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
GENRE: Golf
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$79.95
SCORE: 7

The real professional players were filmed taking swings, so that aspect of the game looks absolutely spectacular. However, there isn't anything else here to separate it from others in the genre. Try Everybody's Golf instead.

Rainbow 6

PUBLISHER: Jack of all Games
GENRE: Action/Espionage
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

An excellent spy-like thriller that will require more than just gunpowder to play. Smart enemies and a team of many to commandeer makes it a winner.

Ridge Racer Type 4

PUBLISHER: Namco
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$89.95
SCORE: 8

On one hand, the game's physics and mechanics are well executed through the JogCon. On the other hand, the game is far too easy to sustain any challenge.

Rollcage

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
GENRE: Racing
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$89.95
SCORE: 9

'No rules racing'. In the future, cars are created with the ability to flip onto their roof and keep driving. Add to that a host of diabolical weapons, hidden routes on every track and destructible scenery and you have Rollcage. An amazing game.

RONIN BLADE

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Action/adventure
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$89.95
SCORE: 9

A story of a ronin samurai and female ninja with Resident Evil-esque backdrops. Lovely graphics, good storyline. Features a battle system with customisable combos, but more importantly the dynamic sex appeal that made The X Files such a hit.

RUGRATS

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Multi-format
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$109.95
SCORE: 7

Rugrats is possibly the best choice around at the moment for the young gamers. It also features a variety of different minigames that are simple and enjoyable as well. The game is presented colourfully and is hugely enjoyable as long as you are young at heart.

SHADOW MADNESS

PUBLISHER: Crave
GENRE: RPG
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 8

A competent RPG from America to rival the likes of the best of Japan. A slightly more emotionally powerful storyline to what you would normally expect, with all the spells and stats you would want to poke a stick at. The cool battle system makes it worthwhile.

SHADOWMAN

PUBLISHER: Acclaim
GENRE: Morbid Platformer
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 7

Has a gripping storyline, one or two new ideas, and manages to breathe sufficient life into this tired old genre to keep most people playing to the end. Like Tomb Raider minus the bosom with much better voice-acting. Not to mention sinister Voodoo imagery.

SHANE WARNE CRICKET

PUBLISHER: Sega-Ozisoft
GENRE: Cricket
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$119.95
SCORE: 9

Shane Warne Cricket was the winner of the Network Interactive Games and Movies Awards - PlayStation Game of the Year, because it was the absolute first cricket game available on the PSX. Still, it is remarkably close to the real thing.

SILENT HILL

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Horror Adventure
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$109.95
SCORE: 8

A truly petrifying thriller with astounding cinematography. It is let down by its weak characters, sometimes too dark settings and lack of plot direction. Still, it is guaranteed to deliver many shivers for those who really want to wet their pants.

SILICON VALLEY

PUBLISHER: Jack of all Games
GENRE: 3D Platformer
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

This free-roamer is made compelling by its novel idea of letting you control any of a huge number of different droids on a space hulk. Puzzles and exploration, sheep on springs, dogs with rockets, and lethal polar bears keep the interest high in this cartoony update of Paradroid.

SLED STORM

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Snowmobile Racing
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

Visually stunning and aurally satisfying, this snowmobile racing game drags you through both convoluted tracks and wide open spaces. Advanced physics modelling represents the internal forces of your snowmobile as you belt it all over the convoluted and well designed tracks. You can blaze trails, or just kick up the powder in this surprisingly satisfying racing game.

SOUL REAVER

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: 3D RPG/Adventure
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$109.95
SCORE: 9

In this gothic tale of the supernatural you play an ex-vampire turned soul reaver. Brooding and extremely well-spoken, this game is huge, with superlative graphics and a cool story. Even the loading screens are disguised as eerie cinematic sequences.

SOUTH PARK

PUBLISHER: Acclaim
GENRE: 1st Person Shooter
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 6

A bog-standard shooting game set in the South Park universe. True to the series, with authentic voice samples, weapons

and settings, but offering nothing new to the genre. Even die-hard fans will be irked at this effort. Now that Quake 2 is out, this South Park game is redundant.

SPACE INVADERS

PUBLISHER: Activision
GENRE: Shooting
PRICE: A\$69.95/NZ\$89.95
SCORE: 5

The game of old returns in 3D, but it's not really any better than the 21-yr-old original. The addition of two player mode and special weapons save the game, but the bosses still suck. Naturally, it is in pseudo 3D. If you finish the whole thing you unlock the original version, that was obviously a move to assure the "real" game would be played at all.

SPEED FREAKS

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Racing
PRICE: A\$69.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

A smooth racing game for one to four players simultaneously, by way of a quartered split screen. There are plenty of weapons, speed-ups and wacky characters, which show how much Sony drew from Nintendo's Mario Kart to create this little winner. A pity then that it's completely outclassed by Crash Team Racing.

STAR WARS: MENACE

PUBLISHER: Playcorp
GENRE: Action/adventure
PRICE: A\$99.95/NZ TBA
SCORE: 4

One of the most underwhelming games of all time, The Phantom Menace adventure game plays by very old rules. You run around flicking switches and slashing endless hordes of robots. Everything is unoriginal, except for the lame 'Force meter'. You can use your mitacloreans to knock over said hordes of robots, which is even less satisfying than killing them.

SYPHON FILTER

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Tactical Espionage
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ TBA
SCORE: 9

Syphon Filter is the game for all you guys left wanting more after Metal Gear Solid. It's viewed over the shoulder, like Tomb Raider, but it has much better controls and heaps of weaponry to play with. Commando rolls, auto-aiming, and no lengthy cut scenes interfering with your espionage action. Some of the puzzles are a little obtuse, though.

RONIN BLADE



SHADOW MADNESS



SLED STORM



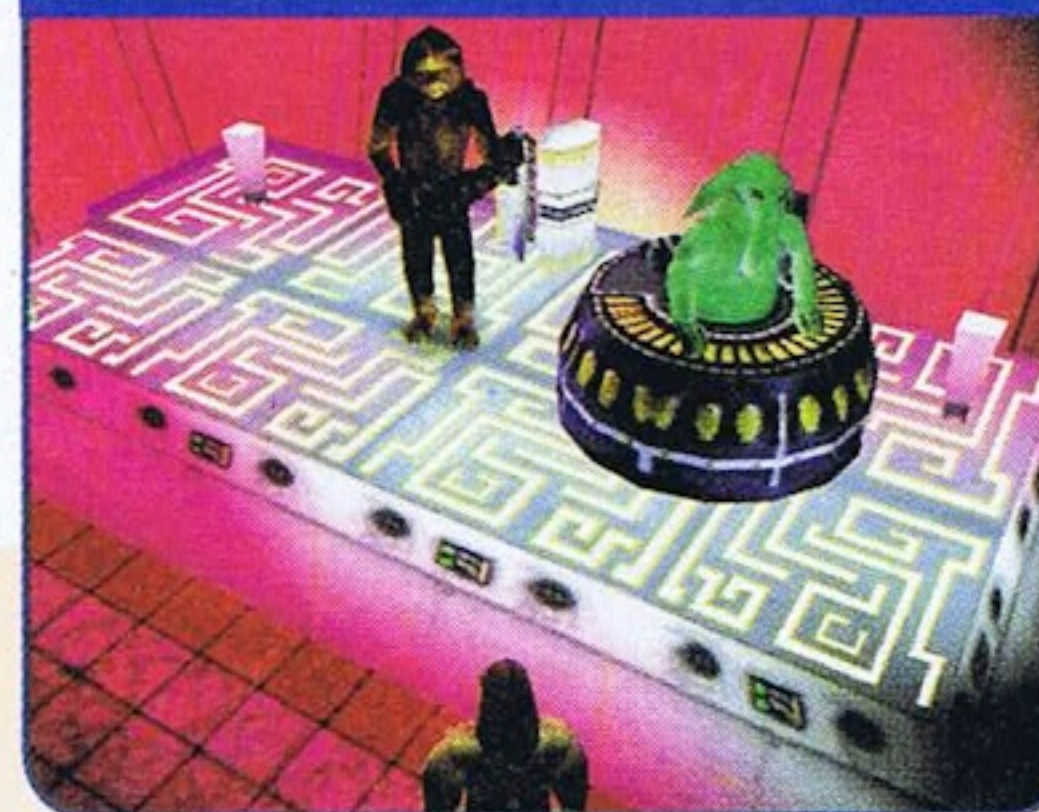
SOUTH PARK



SHADOWMAN



STAR WARS



TOMB RAIDER IV



TOMB RAIDER III

PUBLISHER: Eidos
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$119.95
SCORE: 9

It will take anyone ages to finish this considering that it's much harder. Improvements include smarter enemies, triangular scenery, rounder boobs, and a new crawling technique. You should know what to expect from Lara Croft, er, Croft by now.

TOMB RAIDER IV

PUBLISHER: Eidos
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$119.95
SCORE: 9

The latest and greatest adventure starring Lara Croft, this game goes back to basics by providing smarter graphics, smarter level designs, and a training mode where you get to see Lara in her sumptuous youth as a 16 year old. Don't miss it!

TOMORROW NEVER DIES

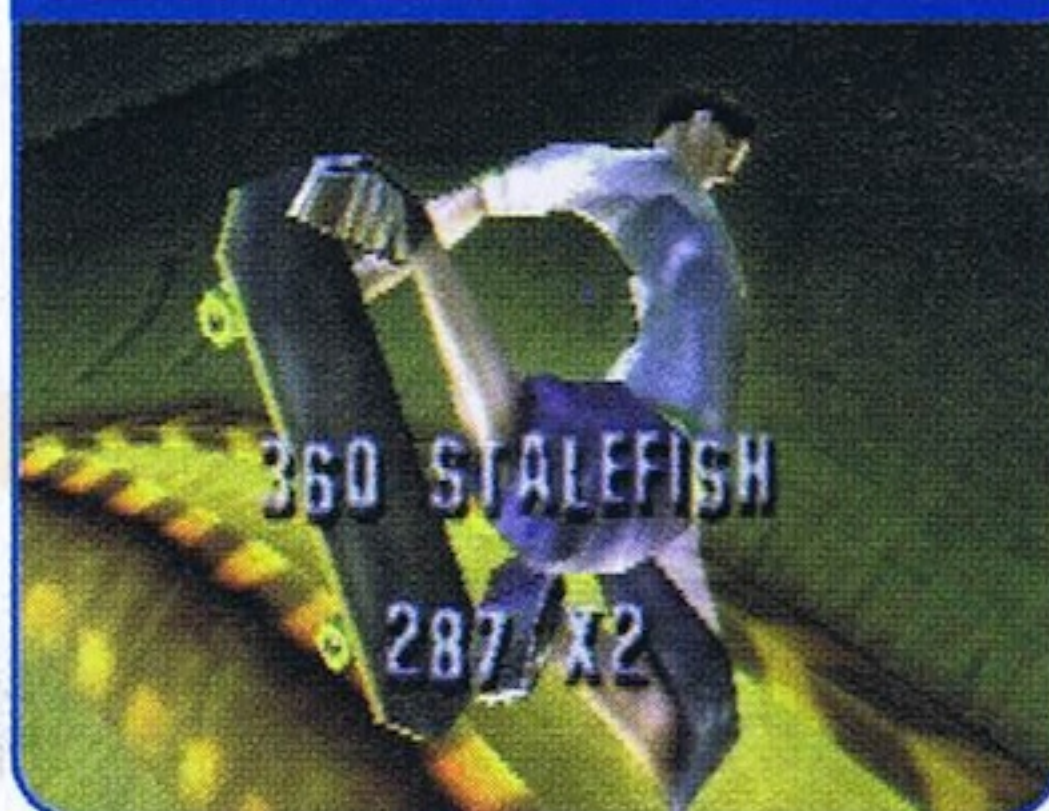


TOMORROW NEVER DIES

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: 007 Action
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 8

The only things letting this title down are the multiple control systems, none of which are very fluid or intuitive. The good things about Bond shine through in the ability to ski, drive and scuba dive as well as run around shooting baddies - all in the same level! Lots of cool gadgets too for that authentic spy-like action.

TONY HAWK



TONY HAWK

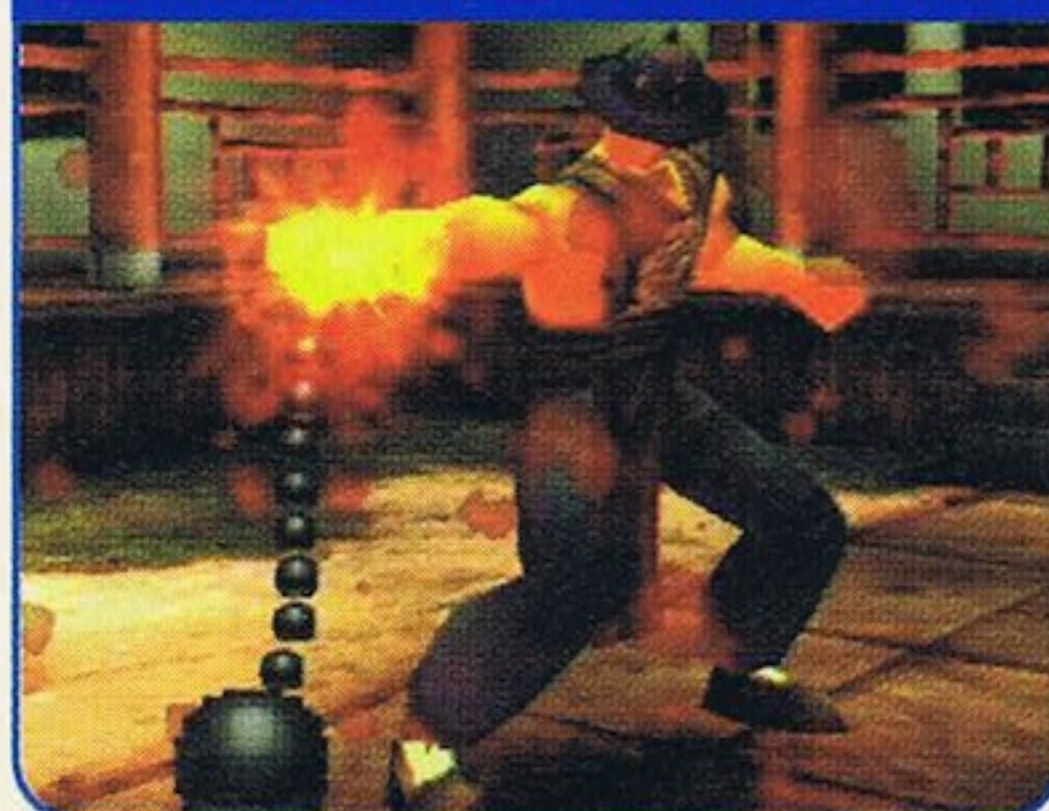
PUBLISHER: Activision
GENRE: Skateboarding
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 10

Superb, sublime, exquisite, exemplary, amazing, astounding, enthralling and excellent. Tony Hawk supervised the creation of this fine game and the results bring tears to the eyes. You'll be ollying into seventh heaven. Vast environments, superlative graphics, and the soundtrack could have been taken from any thrasher's walkman. Hours of bliss.

WIP3OUT



WU TANG: TASTE THE PAIN



WIP3OUT

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Futuristic
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$89.95
SCORE: 8

Much flatter, greyer, smoother but some might say not as much fun. The only thing that makes it worth buying over 2097 is the split-screen and link-up options, allowing for four player frolics. Wip3out's frame rate is exceptionally smooth, even in the multiplayer races. The soundtrack is the traditional hardcore techno, now more trancey and consistent than before.

WWF ATTITUDE

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Wrestling
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 8

Attitude features a great wrestler maker. This Create-a-wrestler mode is the most innovative feature we've seen in a wrestling game to date, allowing you to custom design almost anyone that you can think of, right down to tattoos, hairbands and obesity. Plus there are over 25 modes of play for single and multiplayer mayhem.

UM JAMMER LAMMY

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Rhythm/Dance
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

The splendid sequel to Parappa has more than thrice the songs, plus extra modes for two player rapping and jamming action. Unfortunately the PAL release was slightly edited due to dangerous references to death and philosophy, but it still maintains its spontaneous Japanese style. If you never discovered Parappa, go out and discover Lammy now.

U RALLY 2

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Rally Racing
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 10

The fastest rally racer on the PSX, VR2 creams Colin McRae, Rally Cross and its own prequel. A comprehensive track editor adds countless circuits to the already whopping 92 available, and there are all the upgrade and set-up options you could shake an oil stick at. Even the four player split screen mode works as smooth as Cassanova Frankenstein. This is a fan favourite, and rightly so.

WARZONE 2100

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: 3D Real Time Strategy
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$109.95
SCORE: 8

An excellent attempt at the impossible - a 3D RTS on the PlayStation. Tweaked to match the PC counterpart in PlayStation playability, it has a foreboding post-apocalyptic storyline to back up an incredibly deep and long lasting game. The final result is surprisingly good - in fact better than games like C&C, Red Alert, or Warcraft. Great for fans of realtime strategy.

WU TANG: TASTE THE PAIN

PUBLISHER: Activision
GENRE: Multiplayer Fighting
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 5

Only receiving points for its multiplayer value, Wu Tang is one of the worst fighters ever made. To top off the uncharismatic characters and lack of innovation in the battle system, the game makes a great deal of fuss over its unscintillating fatality animations. It takes cheesy corporate exploitation of an otherwise well-known hip-hop group to an all-time high.

WCW MAYHEM

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: 3D Real Time Strategy
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$109.95
SCORE: 8

This is Electronic Arts' answer to Acclaim's WWF Attitude. In a break from the norm, this game provides less of a wrestling sim and offers more a sim of the bollocks you watch on television. That is, it focuses on the theatrics of wrestling: the drama, the kidnappings, the taunts, the piss-taking, the streetside brawls... the atmosphere it provides more than makes up for the attacks it should have otherwise contained, which makes it a worthwhile purchase for any fan of the TV shows.

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Action/Adventure
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 8

Not unlike Tomb Raider, or Tenchu, this third-person action game pits you as Xena against an army of leather-clad nasties. Kick, slash, or use that death frisbee of hers, controlled inflight by death frisbee cam! You can actually steer the thing towards the codpiece of your nearest enemy (they're all men of course). Xena: Warrior Princess is not really an amazing game, but is lots of medieval fun. Like the TV show, you get to rescue terrorised innocents and deal justice unto their evil-doers.

XENA



TRIPLE PLAY 2000

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Baseball
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 8

Terrific graphics and splendid gameplay make Triple Play 2000 the only choice for you if you want to add a baseball sim to your PlayStation collection.

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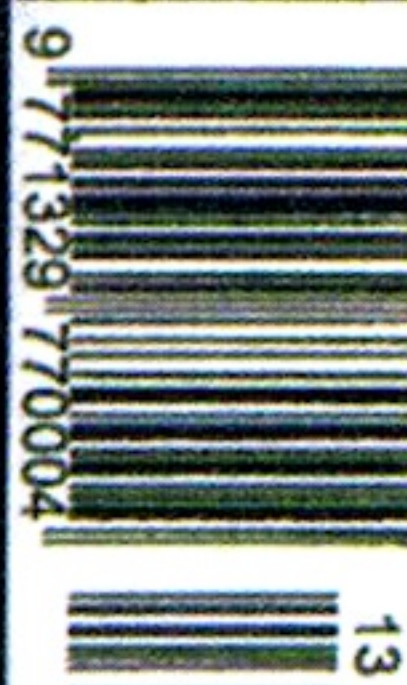
SLED STORM
SYPHON FILTER
TOMB RAIDER 3
BROKEN SWORD 2

**ACTION
REPLAY**

Just how do those codes work?



**next
gaming**



13

On SALE Now

THE CRITICS' CIRCLE

This is where the PlayStation crew take a step back and look at the big picture. The Critics' Circle is a forum where we hammer out issues that arise in the world of PlayStation gaming. This month we ask: is there a place for mascots in the videogames industry anymore? Ten years ago, the cause for videogames was championed by a handful of memorable characters like Mario, Link, or Sonic the Hedgehog. They were designed to personify a certain element of the game and they essentially captured their own portions of the market through advertising and ensuing brand recognition. Today, there is Crash Bandicoot, Lara Croft, PaRappa, Ryu and Chun Li, Chocobos, Bugs Bunny, Solid Snake, Dr. Dan and Dr. Don, Xena, Tarzan, Reiko Nagase, Abe, Bomberman, Spyro, Croc, Tai Fu, Rayman, Gex, those apes from Ape Escape... when you think about it, there are so many "mascot" games that it's almost impossible to distinguish between them. They no longer carry the same weight of market recognition as they used to, and they instead come off more as a forgettable collection of eclectic characters. Is there a place for gaming mascots anymore? Are they pointless? Or are they a necessary factor in the gaming industry?

THE CASES IN POINT THIS MONTH ARE:

MARIO

Mascot for: Nintendo
Current Status: Last seen in Smash Bros on the N64



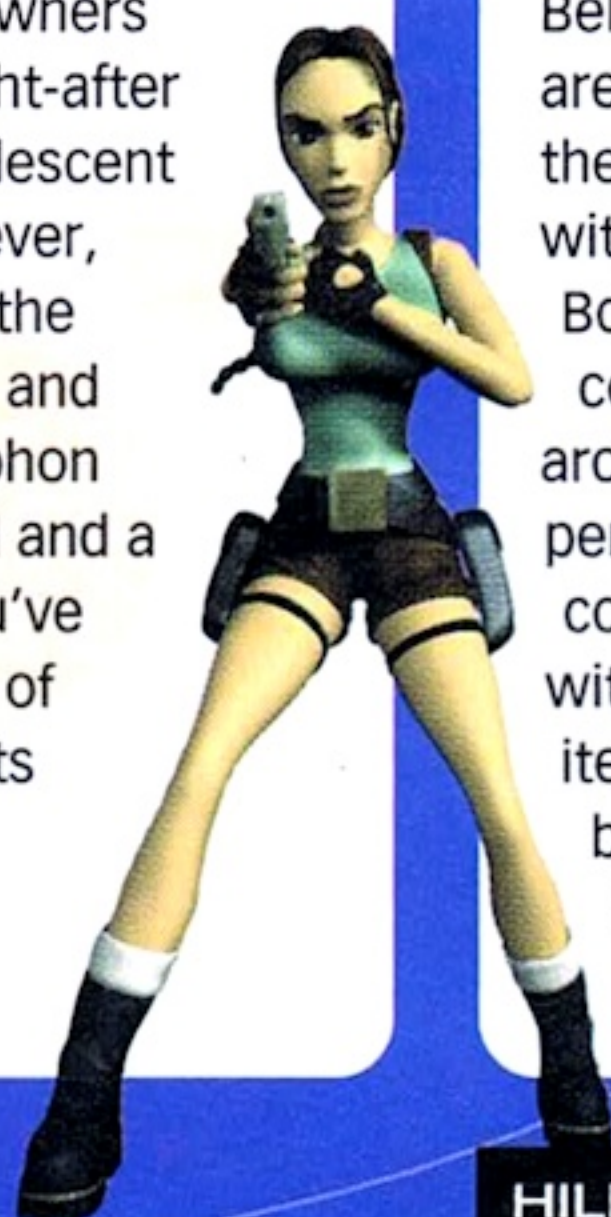
Mario has been around since the dawn of Nintendo's entry into videogame entertainment, beginning with the LCD Game'n Watch toys. He has made cameo appearances in numerous Nintendo games, but the last game based on his adventures was over 3 years ago on Mario 64.

He has since been getting by with his other roles okay?

LARA CROFT

Mascot for: Anybody and everybody.
Current Status: Tomb Raider 4

Next to Crash, Lara Croft is a character almost all PlayStation owners know, being most sought-after by members of the adolescent male community. However, take away the breasts, the pouty lips and the hips, and you've basically got Syphon Filter. Throw in a sword and a grappling hook, and you've got Tenu. Lara is one of the few modern mascots whose character is not defined by the games she stars in.



GEX

Mascot for: Crystal Dynamics
Current Status: Last seen in Deep Cover Gecko

Believe it or not, there are a lot of people out there who get Gex confused with Croc. And why not? Both of these green coloured creatures run around in a 3rd person perspective through a colourful environment, with a goal of collecting items and whacking baddies with their tails. How different is this from Spyro?

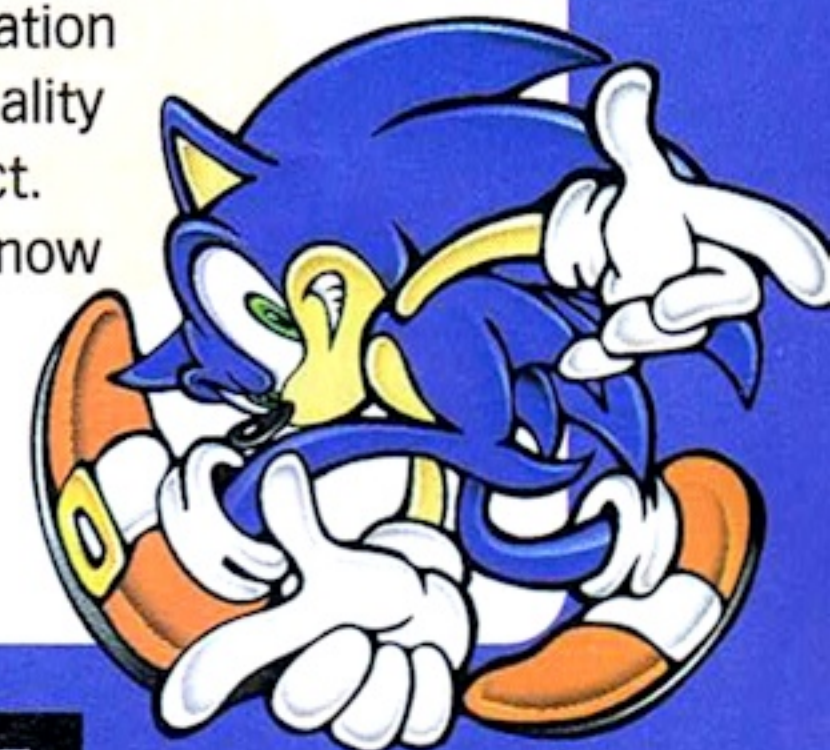


SONIC

Mascot for: Sega
Current Status: Doing the rounds on Sonic Adventures on the Dreamcast.

Sonic was designed by Sega to directly compete with Mario. However, the 3 or 4 sequels that appeared after the first Sonic game were absolute disasters that served only to reduce his credibility as a stable representation

of his quality product. Sonic now returns, but to challenge what kind of competition?



KEVIN CHEUNG



The 80's notion of a mascot that carries the weight of a system on his or her shoulders is dead. Why? The mascots of 3rd party developers don't beat the drum for any one system anymore. They're out for themselves. The reason we get so many forgettable mascots is because they're just not memorable enough. Characters like Lara or Crash stand out, but the tired Western concept of slapping a pair of shorts on a fluffy animal is starting to wear thin, especially since there are so many of them. I'd like to see more games where it's the story that defines the game. I'm sick to death of games that are built on the appeal of a lone character.

Lara Croft



HILLOUS LESSLIE



I think it's just a matter of an overflow in the number of actual games coming out these days. As games become more popular and widely accepted as more than just idle children's pastimes, games are bringing with them a stronger sense of maturity. No longer can the big developers rely on a recognisable central figure to sell their games. As the average age of the modern day gamer rises, we start to see more sexual influence being exploited to sell games. Just look at Lara and that Reiko chick from Ridge Racer Type 4. As these promotional idols mature, they transcend the boundaries from system to system so that nobody can claim them as their own.

Reiko Nagase



JAMES COTTEE



It would be too easy to say symbols cater to the lowest of hangers-on, the symbol-minded. There's nothing wrong with identifying with a given character or aspect of a video game, be it the misogynistic commentary of Duke Nukem, or the tribal dancing of Crash. But substituting recognition of some trivial gaming personality for rigorous analysis of the genuine merits of a game, well, it goes without saying how naive such trivialities seem when compared with the programs actual worth. People don't go around questing for Ling Xiaoyu T-shirts because they liked Tekken 3. Granted, a lovable mascot may be reason enough to buy a novelty item, but not a game.

Ling Xiaoyu







NEXT EDITION

NEXT MONTH WE WILL HAVE A SWAG OF NEW RELEASES FOR REVIEW. LOOK OUT FOR:

GRAN TURISMO 2

Gran Turismo was one of the most successful racing games ever in the videogames industry. Can Polyphony Digital repeat their performance, or perhaps even eclipse the standards they set? Find out next month as we give you the full low-down on one of the most highly anticipated racing titles in gaming history.

GRANDIA

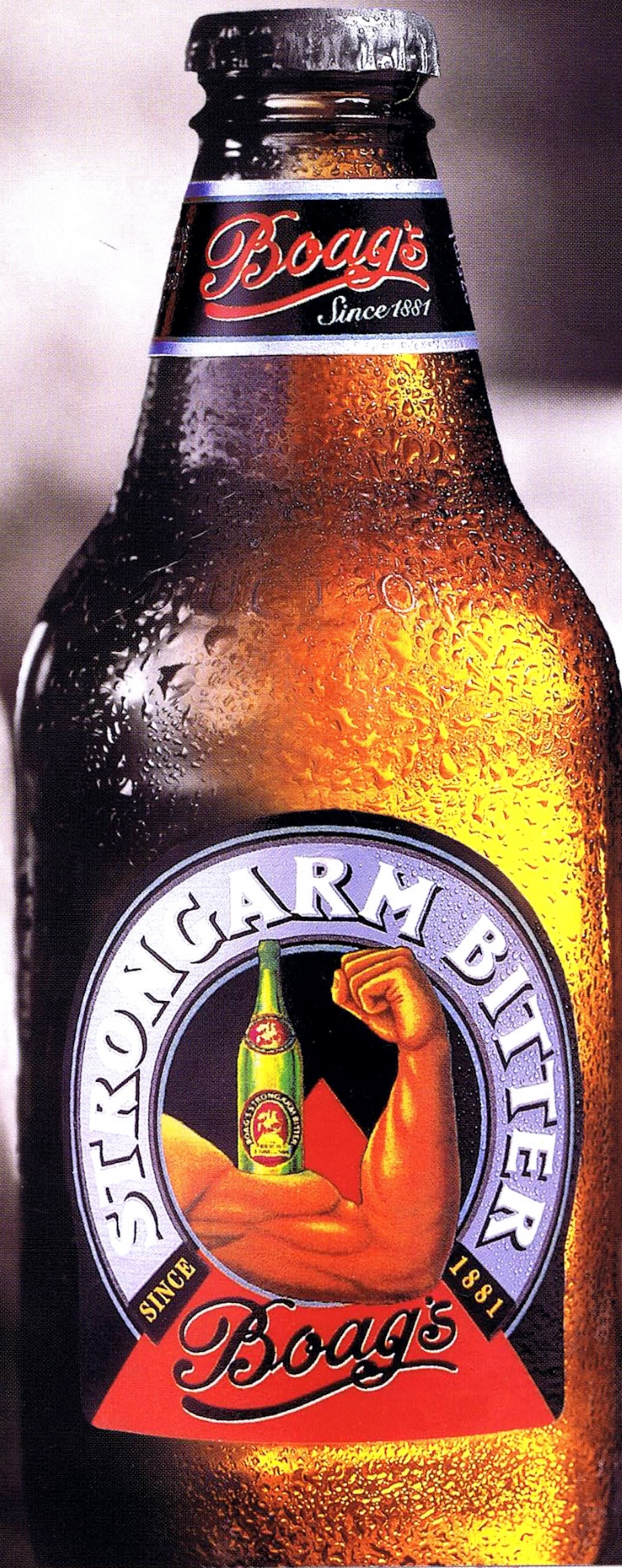
So you were blown away by Final Fantasy VIII? And Final Fantasy VII holds a proud little spot in your shelf as one of your favourite games of all time? Whether you're a budding RPG fan or an experienced connoisseur, you simply cannot miss out on our full report on Grandia next month.

SHEEP!

Lemmings-related malarkey abounds as we bring you more details about Sheep! You can lead them along, blow them up, zap them, run them off cliffs, dig big holes in the ground, have them kidnapped by aliens... and all this hilarity is made possible through an artificial stupidity system!

ALSO COMING NEXT MONTH:

More on Resident Evil 3, Worms, World Cricket 2000, interviews with star Japanese developers, behind the scenes of Speedball 2100, and much, much more!



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